

# Women Victimization in Sindh: A Sociological Study

Zareen Qadeer, Abdul Jaleel Mirjat, Bahadur Ali Soomro

## Abstract

*Sindh as the province of Pakistan is known as a prosperous, multilingual, cultural and traditional along with the different clans, communities and tribes of various castes living for the many more decades. Irrespective to this; Sindhi society presents the drawbacks on account of women victimization in forms of socio-cultural religiosity trend as well patriarchic nature of the communities. Human communities face the different genres of social issues including crime; inequalities, obsolete traditional and customary norms; gender discrimination, injustice, and violence and so forth. The study is based on quantitative approach. It covering the survey questionnaire strategy, and interview schedule for 404 sample size as employed for the acquisition and analysis of the data that is gained from the respondents. Women are victimized due to inequality, discrimination, lack of education, domestic violence, low status, religious, cultural and traditional trends; societal norms and so on. This study may lead the thoughtful and systematic approach to the social researcher, policy-makers and others for the solution of women victimization in the society. Hence, the outcomes of the current study may contribute to the research scholars for comprehension of women victimization in Sindh. The principal value of the study is to shed light on the victimization to women in Sindh province of Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Victimization, Women, Violence, Dominancy and rights

## Introduction

Sindh is stated as a rich province of Pakistan, and embodied with religious, cultural and traditional trends for the many more decades. Additionally, the various clans, communities and tribes of the different castes, clans and religions settled since an ancient era and they habitually follow and practice of forefathers' norms, laws, traditions, social values and rules in the society, meanwhile the people of Sindh have been numbered as generous, friendly, lovely and hospitable (Yusuf, 2009). However, the human society as founded on humanity, tranquility, brotherhood, mysticism, caring, simplicity and value for others' opinions and emotions as well mutual understandings among the members and



with others in the society (Baloch, 1965). Irrespective to this, each society presents the drawbacks too in the asocial world. Similarity, a society confronts with the numerous barriers and reasons in form of violence, crime, killings, snatching, and targeting and taking social and human rights of others in the society. Thus, the society is submerged into the various trends for women while glancing over such the situation within society for women remain like two sides of the coin as the favorable and unfavourable level in a society. As for the favourable situation that stands sound for women is narrated in the historical texts while the vast literature witnesses that such the society remains a positive towards women and exhorts male figure to develop genuine emotions for women. Besides to this, women in male-dominant society victimized and demoralized in a society. Women ignored at every field of social life owing to male dominancy, and lacking of the fundamental rights such as education; freedom in selection and expression in social lives and so forth (Zuhur, 2005).

Additionally, society is based on feudalism mindsets that has hindered women from the benefits of a society and imparting the overall low status in this way. Thus, Sindh is predominantly rural-based populated region and feudal mindset people where women are denied to give their rights due to the situational and cultural perspectives. They are ill-treated as compared to male figures. Further, inequalities and discriminations as hindered to gain an education. In Sindh, many socio-economic and cultural factors cause women victimization. These factors include individual decision making in households, natal kin and residing with in-laws, abuses due to lack of awareness of fundamental rights (Shaikh, 2003). Besides, misuse of mobile technology, dowry and dower, and classification of upper and lower classes severely ruin the women's lives and responsible for abusive relationships (Soomro et al., 2011). Women bear violence and discrimination due to religious norms and misuse of cultural and social values (Tahir, 2017). Due to such reasons, the women of Sindh primarily victimizing. Women as excluded in taking- decision and firmed to customs and traditional trends. Women are regarded as the property of male and dishonoured in the name of honour. Victimization against women takes the place of male -dominancy and unlawful practice. Women victimized through psychological and socio-cultural factors that are deep-rooted in the social strata of society. Women victimization caused migration and suicides as well as the accidents in a community—women victimization in the name of honour that made adultery and guilty in a civil society. Women victimization linked with socio-cultural and historical perspectives. Victimization resorts women to separation and divorce. Moreover, women victimized due to suspicious character, male choices and tribal custom as well as traditional practices.

Woman victimization is concerned with feudal and traditional mindset of people in a male-dominated society. Women victimization actions are mostly taken by family figures including a brother, father or husband. Women victimized due to illegitimate get relationships. Social hierarchy and offensive behaviour led to women victimization. Women being victimized due to illicit sex outside marriage. Socio-cultural, miserable

conditions and psychological features resulted in the victimization of women. Victimization caused health issue and the death of women in society. Women victimization can be taken at any venue such as the private, street, public, workplace, home, institution, battlefield and spaces whereas coercion imposed on women for socio-cultural and psychological features that resulted in victimization of women in the society. Women as victimized in forms of sexual, psychological and physical by their family members because of the domestic works. In addition to this, other factors including the lack of education, falsified beliefs, imbalanced empowerment; lack of awareness of the rights; lack of support from government and others affected and victimized women in society (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020; WHO, 2020; Courtney et al., 2020). Victimization resulted in indiscrimination and exposed the various types of violence in society (Gassó et al., 2020).

Further, illiteracy, low-esteem, Sindhi traditional culture, poverty, outdated customs, feudal system, the weak economic position of the women led to victimization in a society (Adhikari, 2007). Women victimization took the place of multiple kind of violence; social and cultural beliefs. Overall in the society of Sindh, women as ignored because of the various factors that devastated the entire rights of women in society. Thus, women devalued and disrespected among family members. Hence, they are victimized in many contexts. They face discrimination, negligence and victimization on the social, economic and cultural basis. Parting with this, they are forcibly silenced on account of dominancy of male. Women are denied to give their fundamental rights and treated as slaves in urban and rural settings. Thus, the victimization is an outcome of violence and situational as well as ethical viewpoints. Women are made insecure and discriminated in human society (Peterman et al., 2020). Besides this, women treated badly within a family. Women are bound within tribes and communities. Therefore, women are considered a weak figure in human society, and tortured and killed easily. Hence, victimization is a tool to develop a fear among them. In this pattern; they are restricted and limited to the social strata of human society. They live on the mercy of their male figures for the survival facts in human society. In this respect, they go through the traditional and customary norms of society. Therefore, the following objectives are set out:

1. To examine the role of parental illiteracy towards women victimization.
2. Investigate the role of poverty towards women victimization.
3. To explore the role of low income of rural families towards women victimization.

### **Literature review**

Sindh, as a prosperous province of Pakistan, is divided into the different clans, communities, castes, tribes, religions and cultural trends. Further, the society presents the individual's social life, norms, values and status within members of families, tribes and communities. Additionally, human societies towards women remain as the positive since traditional eras and many decades. Hence, women considered as the more respectable and having an equal status (Yusuf, 2009). Islam imparts a fundamental law of social life,

equal human rights for individuals in society (Baloch, 1965). Thus, it guarantees equal rights to women including fiscal rights and social status; educational benefits and freedom of choices in social life as well as physical work. “No nation can rise to the height of glory unless their women are side by side with them. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live.”.... Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Father of the Nation narrated such the meaningful facts. Historically, Sindh is considered as the protector of the esteem and values of women. But, women as tortured and killed in the pretext to save the status of male (Zuhur, 2005). Sindh is predominantly rural-based populated area, and the feudal mindset intensified the victimization circumstances of women in Sindh. Women are denied their rights including education, freedom of expression and social status. Further, they are treated as slaves in urban and rural settings. Such the victimization is an outcome of violence and cultural perspectives (Waheed, 2010). Women are ill-treated because of the low status as imparted by male figure in society; and women in the workplace given the fewer wage as compared to male figures (UNIFEM, 2000). Women are made insecure the overall at every pace, including education, employment, health, and nutrition and other fruitful fields for survival in society. Therefore, inequalities and discrimination carried out against women in human society. Besides this, women treated badly within a family (The Kathmandu Post, 2007). Women restricted within specific regions (Adhikari, 2007). Discrimination attitude for women hindered to education (Pandey, 2006). In some areas, women do not gain a job for survival and bound within tribes and communities (Mandal, 2007). The family decision is taken by the head of family and women are kept as uneducated in a society. Thus, a woman is excluded in taking- decision and planning within a community owing to unawareness and paucity of knowledge. The woman is bound because of customs and traditional trends (Bhadra, 2002). The pre-Islamic approach indicated as a social disgrace in the form of burying daughters alive (Hanif, 2011). Women treated as inequality and unequal balance in human society due to domestic violence (Karmalianiet at., 2008). In society, women considered as the property of male in a society, and male decides her fate and the future. In rural society, women sold, exchanged and bought as a commodity. Women dishonoured in the name of the honour society. Traditional and cultural trends prevailed in society. Women are kept in shades and their decisions and given fewer values in a community. Violence against women indicated a dominancy of the male in a society that is an unlawful practice. Therefore, women recognized as a victim through unethical charges (Haviland et al., 2013). Women victimized through psychological factors owing to socio-cultural barriers that led to crime in connection with the various issues of inheritance and tribal rivalry/ family (Joseph et al., 2005). Women victimized since medial as well as Arab eras (ShirkatGah, 2003, Goldstein, 2002). Customary laws resulted from the women victimization in society. Women victimization reasoned the suicides and accidents in a society (Haybhay, S., Patwe, D., & Jawale, 2013).

Migration sometimes resulted the issue of crime in the form of murder or rape for women in society (Purcell-Riederer, 2013). Women demoralized through honour –killing. Honour killing regarded as socio-religious perspectives, but has confirmed that is not allowed in any religion of the social world. Thus, it indicates that honour killing is because of the weakness of women status (Elkayam, 2009). Women victimization in the name of honour made adultery and guilty (Roberts et al., 2013). Cultural trend, ignorance and male dominancy resulted in women victimization in a society (Daily Times, 2014). They are estimating that nine hundred murders in the name of honour in the year 2012 (HRCP, 2013).

Women victimization associated with social and cultural barriers, religious and historical factors and the dominant status of man (Jafri, 2008). Women suffered within a society owing to social issues, including of problem of marriage and extramarital affair (The News, 2013). Hence, extramarital relation victimization of women in society. Henceforth, women segregated in the shape of divorce, committing adultery, taunting, settling debts and so forth (Shah, 2007). In some tribes, women victimized due to tribal custom and traditional practice (Patel and Gadit, 2008). Women victimized on account of male choices in society (The News, 2014). Women's suspicious character is victimized through traditional and customary norms (Pakistan Today, 2013). However, cultural barriers and social norms victimize women (Khalil, 2010). Women victimization associated with women rights, weak vision and mission (Jafri, 2008; Lari, 2011). Woman victimization regarded as a traditional factor and feudal lord culture, male-dominant society, and illiteracy equally draft narrow mindset (Bhanbhro et al., 2013). Therefore, lack of education, traditional practice and inequality as well mindset resulted in victimization of women (Miller, 1999). Injustice with women in treatment associated with traditional norms and feudalism as well as traditional mindsets (Dawood, 2009). Further, the various forms of victimization by intimate partner included as sexual violence and non-consensual sex; wife-beating and threatening; controlling behaviours that are taken against women (Shaikh, 2003; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Women affected and devastated mentally and physically on account of victimization, resulting in depression and adverse pregnancy outcomes (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Khan & Hussain, 2008). Traumatic stress and depression pushed women towards panic, suicidal attempt and isolation and anxiety (Garcia et al., 2020). Women victimization actions are mostly taken by family members such as a husband, father or brother (Shaikh, 2003). Women victimized because of domestic exploitation and in the name of honour by family members each year (Girls & Movement, 2014; Aurat Foundation, 2014). Women victimized due to an illegitimate affair (Shaikh, 2000, 2003). Family attitudes and reactions resorted to women victimization in a society (Flood & Pease, 2006). However, cultural and social norms as well as individual behaviour affected women value in the community (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Flood & Pease, 2006; Do, Weiss, & Pollack, 2013; Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt, & Zimmerman, 2015). Gender gap results in the victimization of women in society (Miller, 1999). Social hierarchy and offensive

behaviour led to women victimization (Do, Weiss, & Pollack, 2013; Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). Masculinity traits resorted male to victimize women (Seabrook, Ward, Reed, Manago, Giaccardi, & Lippman, 2016). Women victimized due to illicit sex outside marriage (Miller, 1999). However, corporal punishment and violence reasoned women victimization (World Health Organization, 2009). Sexual exploitation and sexual violence caused factor of victimization (UNICEF, 2014). Traditional mindsets are concerned with victimization of Women (Hassan, 1995). Women victimization reasoned of social, physical and psychological determinates throughout the social world (Krug, 2002). Women victimization results in psychological consequences (Fikree, 1999). Socio-cultural and psychological features resulted in victimization of women (Carol & Ember, 1993; Wood, 2009). The study of Henry et al. (2020) digital communications technologies is the significant factor for enhancing the domestic and sexual violence against adult women. According to Peterman et al. (2020), the actor such as times of economic uncertainty, civil unrest, and disaster is linked to a myriad of risk factors for increased violence against women and children during the pandemics of COVID-19. Child maltreatment, bullying and other types of youth violence, and intimate partner violence are the frequent acts of violence against children (WHO, 2020). The empirical findings of Castañeda Camey et al. (2020) determine that promoting gender equality and protecting the environment can be positively linked in ways that contribute to securing a safe, sustainable and equitable future. In a similar domain, Courtney et al. (2020) strongly recommended that gender and sex are the robust predictors of the diversity-focused victimization. Gassó et al. (2020) found a positive and significant association between psychopathology and online sexual victimization. Nevertheless, for the female participants, active sexting, passive sexting, and online sexual victimization were all linked with poorer mental health. Victimization takes place due to physical, sexual and psychological violence as well as miserable conditions.

### **Research methodology**

This research study is based on the qualitative approach and the survey questionnaire as employed to obtain data from the participants for this research study. Hence, at the initial level, socio-demographic characteristics (name and address, age, parity, ethnicity, religion, qualification, profession and socioeconomic status) the then, reasons of victimization mainly discussed among the participants. The respondents were women from the different communities and tribes of the Rural Sindh as victimized of the various reasons in Sindh. A quantitative approach applied to describe the other factors of women victimization in Sindh. Hence, investigators and participants developed mutual understandings before the initiative of the study; the then, a survey questionnaire was distributed among participants for such research task.

### **Sampling**

The participants of research task as comprised of 404 sample size; and selected from the

overall kinds of the victimized women in Sindh. Hence, they were taken into confidence for filling the survey questionnaire and interviews with their consent for data collection for the study. The current study attempted to describe the victimized women. Additionally, the participants shared the experiences of social lives as encountered in male-dominancy. The target population of 404, participants was chosen for the study who had been victimized routinely from the members of clans, tribes and communities.

### Research tools

The instrument employed for data from the respondents was the questionnaire developed that is based on the studies by Cazabon et al. (1993), and Coady (2001), the questionnaire included the different factors including the social background of the participants, the various reasons of victimization among the clans, communities and tribes. Hence, self-administrative survey questionnaire used in this respect. The research included a quantitative strategy to obtain and analyze the data from the participants. Additionally, the overall items covered the reasons for women victimization. We applied a three-point Likert scale for getting the responses. The scale consisted of options, for example, 1=agree; 2=neutral and 3=disagree. The initial level, the pilot study was carried out for improvement and refining the questionnaire. We conducted our pilot study on fifteen respondents. The then, the consents for acquiring information and the proper responses related to victimization in Rural Sindh. In this way, the data was generated for such the study. The survey questionnaire was set up with the panel of field experts and senior professors in the respective domains. However, questions age retained descriptively as per the nature of the study for such a research task. Thus, the survey questionnaire covered the general perspectives of women victimization; cultural, religious and traditional trends practiced by clans, tribes and communities. Further, male dominancy factor included in this questionnaire.

### Analysis and results

In total, 404 women have participated in the survey. A majority of the participants highlighted their parents' illiteracy is responsible in acquiring the women victimization in their society. For this, the analysis found as  $n=270$  (66.83%) respondents agreed on this statement. At the same time,  $n=96$  (23.77%) were not supported by the argument by showing disagreement (Table 1). Similarly, we found poverty as a significant barrier for women victimization ( $n=292=72.28=$  agree, and  $n=104=25.74%=$  disagree) (Table 1) Hence; it supported our statement. The analysis highlighted that due to the low level of income, rural families have become unable to handle these issues. A majority of the women raised such a problem by showing their agreement with the statement ( $n=262=64.85\%$ ).

On the other hand, only 27.72% ( $n=112$ ) women disagreed with such the statement (Table 1). As a result, our proposed statement was supported. Further, it was also observed that economic causes influence the literacy rate, which ultimately leads to

women victimization. This investigation was approved by the women in which they (n=288=71.29%) agreed for this reason. We found only 24.25% (n=98) who did not support this statement. While remaining (n=16=3.96) respondents neither agree nor disagree from such the phenomena (Table 1). Finally, families with low-income are powerless to solve the issues. Among these issues, women victimization is also a significant issue. Most of the women (n=301=74.50%) showed their agreement with the statement (see table 1 in detail).

**Table 1:** Frequency of respondents' opinions

S. No	Items/statements	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Total		Decision
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Parents' illiteracy creates problems in acquiring a women victimization	270	66.83	38	9.40	96	23.77	404	100.0	Agree
2	Poverty is a sever barriers of women victimization	292	72.28	08	1.98	104	25.74	404	100.0	Agree
3	Rural families having low levels of income are unable to face the problem	262	64.85	30	7.43	112	27.72	404	100.0	Agree
4	Economic causes influence on the literacy rate	288	71.29	18	4.46	98	24.25	404	100.0	Agree
5	Low income families unable to resolve problem	301	74.50	16	3.96	87	21.54	404	100.0	Agree

## Discussion

Women victimization made less status and respect of women in human society, and despite the scarifications and services of women for families, clans, tribes and communities are numbered less valuable in male-dominancy. Hence, psychological and religious perspectives; women considered as a feeble part of society. The natures of women remained an exceptionally soft, friendly and straightforward among members of the families, clans, tribes and communities. Despite the burden imposed upon them in society for rearing children till to marrying off them, and women faced the difficulties and encountered the experiences of social lives. Additionally, women mostly injured, threatened, killed, beaten, thrown acid, violated, punished, burned, hanged and so forth. Women victimized owing to human violence, lacking education, discrimination, inequality, low status and fewer values. These findings are supported by Castañeda Camey et al. (2020) who found that gender equality and protecting the environment can



be positively linked in ways that contribute to securing a safe, sustainable and equitable future. Sindhi society confronted with the innumerable barriers and hindrance and submerged into the various trends towards women. Male-dominancy remained as the element of victimization and demoralized in a society. Further, women lacked the basic amenities of social lives such as education, justice, equalities, and balanced social life—additionally, feudalism mindsets hindered women from the benefits of society. Ill-treatment, discrimination and inequalities counted as hindrance to women to move ahead in all aspects of social lives. Traditional trends and customs restricted women far from gaining the fundamental rights of social lives from human society. Women victimized through psychological and socio-cultural factors that are deep-rooted in the social strata of a community. Women victimization reasoned migration and suicides as well as the accidents in a society. Women victimization in the name of honour made adultery and guilty in a civil society. Women victimization linked with socio-cultural and historical perspectives. Victimization resorted women to separation and divorce. Thus, women victimized because of suspicious character, male choices and tribal custom as well as traditional practices. Women victimization actions are mostly taken by family figures like a brother, father or husband. Women victimized due to illegitimate affairs. Women victimized on account of illegal sex outside marriage. Women victimized in forms of sexually, psychological and physical by their family members on account of the domestic works—victimization results in discrimination in society. Women ignored because of the various factors that had devastated the fundamental rights of women in society. Women devalued and disrespected among family members; they faced discrimination, negligence and victimization on the social, economic and cultural basis. Thus, women denied to give their fundamental rights and treated as slaves in urban and rural settings. In a nutshell, women victimized and discriminated in human society. Our findings are in line with the recent studies of social sciences like Henry et al. (2020); Peterman et al. (2020); Gassó et al. (2020) who found the various factors which promote the women victimization the different contexts.

### Conclusion

Women are made ignorant and ruthlessly treated in male dominancy on account of low status, less value and respect; lack of education, the influence of religious, traditional and cultural trends of human society. Hence, women discriminated in every field of social lives including employment, health, nutrition and so forth. Women are ill-treated within clans, families, tribes and communities. Women restricted in residency, and excluded from the family decision and retained unaware from many facts within homes. Women sold, bought, exchanged and killed without any intimation. Therefore, women remain as feeble part of a male-dominated society.

Additionally, women butchered owing to honour matter in a society. Violence is daily routine work for women in the social lives that considered as an asset of a male in tribal societies, communities, clans and homes. Women misbehaved and unethically

treated in human society. Hence, women behaved like this for several decades. Thus, such victimization resorted women to commit suicides and accidents in human society. Adultery, rape, murder and honour killings demoralized women in the community. Women victimized owing to male choices and preferences in human society. Besides this, feudalism, tribal mindsets and traditional setups concerned with the victimization of women in human society. Socio-cultural, miserable conditions and psychological features resulted in the victimization of women. Victimization reasoned health issue and death of women in society. In addition to this, other factors such as lack of education, falsified beliefs, imbalanced empowerment; lack of awareness of the rights; lack of support from government and others affected and victimized women in society. The study concluded with the overall reasons for victimization women in human society.

### **Recommendations**

Women victimization is the reason which damage to society as well as overall dehumanized and demoralized in the walks of social lives. To combat such the victimization against women; some serious efforts are needed. Effective laws should implement by giving fundamental rights to women. The awareness should bring among the women about the fundamental rights of their husbands and household members. There is also a need to diminish the misuse of cultural norms in terms of dowry, which may cause women victimization (Tahir, 2017). Our empirical results suggest that illiteracy, poverty, low level of income of rural families, and economic problems are the significant problems of victimization among the women of Sindh. Keeping in views the prevailing situations of such factors, the government of Sindh should initiate the programs which may eradicate poverty, particularly among the rural women. The government should also launch the plans to provide adult education to rural males' populations to resist the cases of victimization. Finally, the government also should initiate microfinance related schemes to offer loans and financial support to rural people. This would generate the individuals' income and ultimately would diminish the victimization rates.

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