**Journal of
Human Security**

Research Article

Gendering Community Policing and Role of Information Communication Technology: A Case Study of Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan

Abda Khalid[1],* and Ingrid Nyborg[2]

[1] COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad, Pakistan
[2] Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Norway University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway

Corresponding author: abda@cuiatd.edu.pk

Abstract: Gender based violence (GBV) is a heinous crime that Pakistani society is facing. To deal with this menace, both the government and non-governmental organizations have taken steps at various levels to improve police service delivery, competence-building and awareness-raising on GBV, establish women's shelters, establish women's development and welfare units in district welfare departments, and open helplines. However, these initiatives are limited, scattered and lack coordination. Our research aims to better understand the nature of GBV issues, identify the barriers in addressing GBV, and how the introduction of information communication technology (ICT) might improve both competence on GBV and the coordination of the mechanisms dealing with GBV. Using a qualitative approach, we conducted in-depth interviews of relevant actors involved in the process of dealing with GBV. Our research findings show that GBV is a deeply rooted and complex structural phenomenon that requires a well-planned, well-coordinated and politically driven strategy. While information communication technology (ICT) has the potential to improve competence of stakeholder and processes of reporting, mitigating and preventing GBV, access to technology by rural women is limited. It is therefore important that technological innovations take account of contextual constraints and opportunities.

Keywords: Gender based Violence; Information Communication Technology; Community Policing; Human Security; Community organizations; NGOs

1. Introduction

In Pakistan, gender-based violence is a widespread social issue which is increasing at an alarming rate. Women are subjected to numerous types of gender based violence including spousal murders, acid burning, burned alive, beatings, psychological torture and the traditional honor killings [1]. Women must bear violence and discrimination on a daily basis, often justified by a conservative interpretation of social and cultural values and religious norms [2,3]. Structural patriarchy in Pakistan gives control of women's lives to their male counterparts, including their behavior, mobility, control over resources and productive and reproductive choices. The mansplaining of violence defends violence against women by taking various Quranic verses out of their context to justify violence for a 'disciplinary act' [4].

States are responsible for mitigating patriarchy and gender-based violence through their legal systems [5]. Addi-

librello

tionally, the state can play a role in breaking the patriarchal norms which are harmful for their marginalized population [6]. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) guarantees Human Rights protection through Fundamental Rights and the Principles of Policy as specified under Articles 8-28 and 29-40 respectively. The Government of Pakistan, in view of its vision 2025, and its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in respect of vulnerable segments of the society, has given due priority to human rights observance in Pakistan [7]. Pakistan has, both at the Federal and Provincial levels, have enacted legislation to protect women against sexual harassment, forced marriages, denial of inheritance, acid attacks and 'honor killings'. In 2004, different amendments were made in Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) [8]. In addition to relevant federal laws, the Federal Government has also established the National Commission on the Status of Women under the National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012 to monitor and facilitate implementation of laws for the protection of women [9].

This study is set in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province of Pakistan which is one of the most challenging provinces to work in on issues related to gender-based violence. There has always been an opposition and resistance to the passing of pro-women laws, a high prevalence of violence, and poor mobility for women and girls. The 2012–2013 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) stated that KP has the highest percentages in the country for women who have ever experienced physical and/or emotional violence. As in many societies, victims of sexual violence in KP also feel stigmatized, which inhibits reporting. After the passing of the 18th Amendment [10] and international commitment to decentralize the process of making policies to tackle the gender based violence, a number of provincial legislations were adopted by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to mitigate gender-based violence in the province i.e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act 2013, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Deserving Widows and Special Persons Welfare Foundation Act 2014, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Promotion, Protection and Enforcement of Human Rights Act 2014, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women Act 2016, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Harassment of Women at workplace (amendment) Act, 2017 [11]. KP has also taken measures for women's political representation in the Provincial Assembly (17%) and in local governments (30%).

Post devolution of power, KP enacted *"Laissaail e Wal Mahroom"* Foundation Act, 2015 to support women and special persons. The Government of KP has also established a Commission on the Status of Women under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women Act (KPCSW) in 2016. Moreover, a provincial Women's Empowerment Policy has been launched in 2015 in pursuance of the province's commitment to gender equality and mitigate gender-based violence. There have also been attempts to use ICTs to address GBV in the province. The KP government launched a new smartphone application

to assist women experiencing gender-based violence and improve the services it offers via the KPCSW. The app, named KPCSW also works offline. It contains features like text, voice and video messages, and MMS, to help women report cases of violence. People can also access useful information regarding laws protecting women and how to approach KPCSW for help. At the implementation level, toll free helplines "BOLO aur BADLO" at the level of Directorate of Social Welfare and "Zama Awaz" in Women Parliamentary Caucus have been initiated by the provincial government to curb gender-based violence. Women Desks have also been setup in the provincial capital on a pilot basis in collaboration with Police Department to curb gender-based violence. Similarly, the Departments of Zakat, Ushr, Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment look after various marginalized segments of the population such as poor, destitute women, persons with disabilities, orphans, victims of violence and drug addicts through established institutions and autonomous bodies across the Province.

Despite of all these initiatives, KP police data shows an increase in the number of domestic violence cases registered in 2019, especially in murder and battery. In 2018, 180 women were murdered in their households. In 2019, the figure rose to 217. Thirty-six women reported physical abuse at home in 2019, three times more than in 2018 [12]. Despite the efforts made by the provincial government to address GBV, more needs to be done to empower women in social, cultural, economic, political, and legislative process in both public and private life. And while progressive and pro women legislation ensuring the safety and security of women in political, social, and economic spheres exists, the implementation of these legislations is a big question mark. One of the reasons for the lack of implementation could be little or no willingness by the executive, which predominantly is dominated by men, while another could be strong conservative social norms [13].

Keeping in view the complexity, this paper investigates the tension that exists in understanding the issue of GBV i.e. whether it is a personal issue or a social issue; a dispute or a crime, and how the nature and meaning of GBV changes with the approach one follows in understanding the issue. GBV and related crimes are clearly mentioned in laws, community policing guidelines, policies, and gender training and awareness programs. However, it is not internalized and institutionalized in effective structures and practices; the attempts made to address the issue have been mostly cosmetic and inadequate. Rather than taking ownership, the government has engaged NGOs to address the issue, resulting in further lack of ownership. The competence is low in police in dealing with GBV issues. There exists lack of knowledge of laws and their role in dealing with victims and prevention. There is an acute need for training that is both effective and accessible to police and community on how to deal with and prevent GBV. Based on local understandings of GBV, and the barriers that exist in addressing these issues through policy, legal, technical and social means, this paper explores the potential of ICT's to

increase the competence of police, civil society and community by making the relevant information and knowledge available and accessible to relevant stakeholders. The paper begins with a theoretical framework followed by the methods employed. We then present our findings and discussion based on a case study of rural Mansehra, Pakistan We begin by identifying the relevant actors involved in the GBV prevention mechanism and explore their roles and responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses. We then move to a discussion of the possibilities of using ICTs to address some of these challenges and improve coordination, prevention and response to gender-based violence.

2. Theoretical Background of the Study

This study has used an interdisciplinary approach to understand the process of gender-based violence and how state and state led institutions respond to and deal with it. Our interdisciplinary approach has taken perspectives from security studies, development studies and feminist studies and helped us in understanding the problem from a multidimensional perspective, the most important of which are concepts within human security, gender-based violence, community-based policing, and information and communication technology (ICT).

2.1. Human Security

The fundamental concept that is used in this research study is human security. Human security refers to the way in which men and women struggle in daily lives to ensure their wellbeing and security/ insecurity from various forms violence both visible and invisible. Human security has multiple definitions ranging from the popular view of security as the prevention of violence, to broader perspectives including the provision of basic life necessities. As illustrated by Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007), the concepts of security and insecurity have relatively different understandings in different contexts. For some people, insecurity comes from economic loss; however, for others it comes from extremism, violation of human rights, conflicts etc. The same authors suggest that "Security needs to be redefined as a subjective experience at the micro-level in terms of people's experience" [14], p. 2). Human security is a contested term, in the fields of both international relations and development studies. It has emerged as a new concept, acting as an entry point for critical analysis, a worldview, political agenda or paradigm shift [14]. The 1994 Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security presented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has proven to be groundbreaking in this field. As Timothy [15] notes, the report stresses that social and economic insecurity endangers international stability: For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event [...] most people instinctively understand what security means.

It means safety from the constant threats of hunger, disease, crime and repression. It also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of our daily life ([16], p. 3). The Human Development Report [16] redefines the security-development nexus by placing individuals and communities at the center of both security and development. It states that human security has two main categories i.e. "freedom from fear" (e.g. threats from war, conflict and state-sponsored violence) and "freedom from want" (e.g. preventable diseases, economic hardship, poverty, developmental concerns) ([16], p. 24). Debates over this categorization reflect that 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' are inter-related and provide a fundamental basis for human security. However, the gendered aspect of human security is still under-researched. Hoogensen and Gjørv (2005) describe the limitations of the human security debate, and state that gender approaches are relevant and can offer forward direction to operationalization of the concept. In contrast to conventional human security analysis, "gender analysis shows us that top-down articulations of security concepts—such as those from national governments or international organizations—often do not address the security needs of those 'below'. In addition, relying on 'existing mechanisms 'has been a longstanding critique of the gender literature, as these mechanisms have so often overlooked gender violence (domestic and sexual) and/or violence against marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples within what are otherwise considered 'secure' states" ([17], p. 209). Including gender analysis in human security debates will raise questions regarding inequality, power distribution and structural violence. Many critical theory approaches are complementary to one another, while elucidating dominance and non-dominance based on race, ethnicity and class; however, the incorporation of gender makes theses disparities and inequalities more visible. Moreover, gender has been fundamentally decisive for both policy and academic analysis regarding war and peace. Notions of individual-oriented security were discussed in particular during the period of the Enlightenment [1,17–20]. Also, Wolfers [21] poignantly noted that security prior to the world wars of the 20th century was associated particularly with welfare [17]. Without gender analysis, a fundamental power relation is erased from reality [17]. Keeping in mind the context of Pakistan, this paper will explore the nexus of gender-based violence and role of community policing and intervention of technology in understanding the state services and the gaps that exist in dealing with security provision to violence victims in communities. If we analyze the UNDP 1994 definition of human security through a gender lens, we may argue that it opens avenues for both men and women to be equally entitled to all types of securities [16]. However, feminists extend the concept by including sustainable development, social justice, and the protection of human rights and capabilities as central aspects of human security [22]. This broader concept of human security invites thoughts and critical analysis about how gender influences the handling of threats or violence,

and who decides what experiences in conflict situations are important for policy and development initiatives. Knowing people's perceptions about security and insecurity yields a very different understanding of the concept of human security [23]. Human security when understood in context of Pakistan has helped to set a foundation for gaining further insight and understanding of the notions of power inequalities, gendered vulnerabilities in accessing the service provision particularly in dealing with gender based violence victims, which is the main subject of this paper.

2.2. Gender Based Violence

According to UN, violence against women (VAW) and gender-based violence (GBV) can be used interchangeably because during conflict the majority of women face gender-based violence just because they were "women or feminine" [24]. Domestic violence is the most common type of insecurity women face in their daily lives which extremely gendered in nature. It is a contentious term that is widely debated, persistent and neglected form of violence against women. We will discuss GBV in this paper as:

"An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. The term is primarily used to underscore the fact that structural, gender-based power differentials between males and females around the world place females at risk for multiple forms of violence. This includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" ([25], p. 5).

GBV can be the combination of the above-mentioned actions, however, in the context of Pakistan in particular it is still perceived and understood as a private matter inside the four walls of the house. Bringing GBV as an issue into the public sphere is still a challenge, in that it been *"for too long hidden behind closed doors and avoided in public discourse, such violence can no longer be denied as part of everyday life for millions especially women"* ([26], p. 2).

WHO and UN also describe gender-based violence as a basic human rights offence. The 2017 WHO report on violence against women clearly mentioned that Every human being (men and women) has the innate right to his/her physical, sexual, emotional integrity and health [27]. Similarly, The United Nations Charter of Human Rights (1945) grants equal rights to both men and women. The perpetuated violence can occur within the family, community and at the state level, cutting across class, ethnicity, religion, other social divisions, and factors of inequality [28]. Sexual and gender-based violence represents an extreme form of discrimination and a serious human rights violation that may affect a number of human rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and the right to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Acts of GBV threaten the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of victims but remain largely ignored and under-reported, particularly when they occur far from the public eye, which include domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence and rape [3]. A gender perspective on violence is not all about violence on women, but it provides new context, where the focus is shifted from women as victims of violence to gender and the unequal power relationships which are created by stereotypes. A gender perspective on violence against women addresses the similarities and differences in the violence experienced by women and men in relation to vulnerabilities, violations, and consequences [29]. Focus on gender-based violence against women is not to imply that women are never violent against men but although the rates and forms of violence, including intimate partner violence, vary widely across cultures are affecting women more [30]. The term violence is multidimensional and is operational at different levels in the social and state apparatus. The manifestation of violence ranges from visible to invisible, from structural, political to cultural and symbolic [31,32]. As discussed earlier, violence is a gendered phenomenon as it is widely contested in its placement in public and private sphere. Hume (2007, 2008, 2009) suggests understanding the phenomenon of violence from a gendered perspective, as it will defy the homogeneous discourse on violence and allow us to understand the invisible structural violence operational at all levels [33–35]. Gendered accounts of violence will thus both allow an understanding of violence at domestic level, as well as other social and cultural forms of violence against women [33,35,36].

2.3. Community-based Policing

As we saw in the introduction, the police's role in GBV cases needs to be improved and strengthened. One of the challenges for the police in addressing GBV is the lack of trust between police and the public. Trust and confidence in policing has always been investigated as one of the broader social queries in police-public relations. Public trust in police arises as a result of people's expectations towards police. Also, the public is the end user of services and expects the police to provide security and support specifically when their safety is at stake [37]. Thus, their trust is an indicator of the belief they have in the ability of police to provide security and ensure their protection in any given situation [38]. According to Shinar and Stiebel [39] trust in any institution emerges from the public's observations made in relation to the effectiveness, responsiveness and preparedness of the institution [40]. Public trust in police can play a vital role in enhancing police effectiveness and legitimacy of police actions [41]. Trust is linked to the capacity of state police to provide basic citizen security [42]. Public cooperation with police increases when they view police as trustworthy. The existence and extent of trust depends upon a number of factors both within and outside police control. A deficit of trust in police is all too common in deeply divided, post conflict and post authoritarian societie [43,44]. The historical role of police, degree of effectiveness and range of practices in public dealing play a part in explaining the trust deficit.

Strained police-public relations undermine the crucial role of police in ensuring safety and protecting human rights [42]. Winning over peoples' trust and respect is not an easy task; it requires the police to uphold the highest level of honesty, integrity and professionalism to earn the goodwill of the people. Moreover, it is important that police must focus upon establishing positive interactions with the public, respond to the needs of the citizenry with efficacy, adapt and abide by a strong ethical code, and bring in transparency and accountability to their functions [45].

Community-based policing has myriad definitions and approaches which makes it an ambiguous concept [46]. Some of the common aspects that are discussed in literature are "police-community partnerships, a problem-solving approach, and organizational decentralization" ([47], p. 5). It has been recognized widely that policing is not only a matter of crime-fighting and surveillance the concepts of human security and sovereignty are of prime importance in policing [46,48]. Community-based policing focuses on the development of a collaborative partnership between community and the police to proactively address the root-causes of insecurities in the society. As community-based policing is a proactive rather than a reactive approach in nature, citizens' involvement is crucial in both the identification of and solutions to problems. As a result of implementing community-based policing, both the police and the community share enhanced responsibility to curb crime. Police-public partnership, thus formed, results in mutual benefit for both the stakeholders. The concept has gained momentum over traditional policing models not only due to the fact that police in the world today are increasingly underequipped and under resourced to deal with the growing and enhanced complexity of crimes, but also because of the numerous advantages that citizen support and partnership brings to the society at large. To develop community partnerships, the police must build positive relations with the community, involve the community in the quest for better crime control and prevention and pool their resources with those of the community to address the community's most urgent concerns. The partnership of community has become indispensable for both the police and the public. The collaborative relationship formed between police and public results in many advantages, including enhanced public confidence in police department, reduction in societal violence, police-public partnership, peaceful co-existence in neighborhoods, saving in police time from unnecessary arrests and trials, speedy dispute resolution, and diminished need for use of physical force by the police [49,50]. In the context of Pakistan, there have been many attempts to improve community-police relations to enhance the trust of the people, however, these attempts need a more comprehensive approach including more women in the police that can relate to women's insecurities, and more well trained women and men to handle cases related to gender based violence.

2.4. Information and Communication Technologies

According to Tech Target, ICT is defined as, *"An umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. ICTs will often be spoken of in a particular context, such as ICTs in education, health care, or libraries"* [51].

The use of ICTs can transform institutions by making them more accessible, effective and accountable to deliver better quality public services. These ICTs have immense potential to radically transform public institutions and private organizations alike, and to enhance the quality, speed and reliability of services to citizens. Many government institutions and organizations around the globe, including police departments, are adopting ICTs to increase transparency, accountability and quality of services and change the way their administrations work and empower citizens through access and use of information [52].

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, various ICT initiatives have been launched by KP police to help communities to more easily access police. In September 2015, the KP Police established a Police School of Information Technology. The public can now lodge an online First Information Report (FIR) and register complaints. The Victim Services Toll Free Numbers are established that help victims who need quick service or are not in a position to visit a Police Station to file a complaint. Using the toll-free number, a victim can complain about a police officer and police stations. The service aims at both reducing police response time and providing the Provincial Police Office with a monitoring tool for assessing the speed and quality of police service. Both the police and the communities have expressed that the ICT-based initiatives of KP police have helped in establishing good relationships between the police and local communities [53,54]. However, there are also significant limitations to these technologies. Poor internet and mobile phone access in rural areas, high levels of illiteracy, particularly for women to name a few. In terms of reporting sensitive issues such as GBV, these technologies in themselves are not sufficient. It is important in contexts such as KP where there is a lack of trust in the police to address GBV in ways that ensure the safety of survivors that ICT is combined with trust-building processes of awareness raising and gender sensitivity. ICT thus involves more than a technical solution—non-digital information and communication technologies that are currently practices, such as dialog, meetings, social and cultural events where people communicate and build trusting relations are important to link to the development of more digital ICT systems. In this study we use this broader understanding of ICT as a social phenomenon [55] within which digital information and communication is embedded. This will allow us to analyze the role of ICT in addressing GBV in the context of wider societal relations.

3. Methods

In order to understand the complexity of the issue, we identified actors who are working, contributing, or dealing with GBV cases, including community activists, GBV survivors, civil society organizations, police, Health Department staff, Social Welfare Department staff, and staff of *Darul Aman* (women's shelters). The first author then arranged detailed discussions with each stakeholder. The discussion took place in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan , in which the first author and the respondents are fluent. Interviews were conducted with three staff from a women's NGO (one women and two men), two local male activists, one female lawyer, one district officer from social welfare department (male), the head of the emergency department from Ayub Medical Complex (male), one woman police from Shinkiari (city in Mansehra district) and three women police from main Mansehra city, the male Station House Officer (SHO) from main Mansehra police station, and 10 women in a women's shelter. In addition, we also selected a rural community in Shinkiari, Mansehra District to interview ten local men and ten local women to understand their perspectives around GBV, the role of police and how ICT might improve the situation. For all of the interviews, a question guide was developed that focused on exploring issues of gender based violence and the effective role of ICT in enhancing the coordination among various stakeholders involved in mitigating the process of GBV. The discussions were open-ended, allowing the respondents to bring in issues that they themselves considered important. The interviews were then coded by theme and category, and analyzed to explore the various ways each stakeholder understood GBV and their role in addressing key issues. In addition to interviews we also consulted policy documents, and to better understand GBV issues in the area we also studied project reports of a civil society organizations working with GBV issues. In addition, police station in Shinkiari granted us access to the complaint register to see the nature of complaints.

3.1. Case of Mansehra, Hazara Division, KP

Mansehra [56] is a district in Hazara Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. Total area of district Mansehra is 4,579 Sq KM, however the population size is 1,556,460. The dominant language is Hindko. Mansehra district is the largest district of Hazara division, which is further divided into 5 tehsils [57] and 174 Village Councils. Mansehra district has 13 police stations in total. We chose Mansehra after detailed meetings with an international civil society organization that was working on a community policing project with Khuwand e Kor, a local implementing partner organization. The project dealt with police and GBV, and was titled **"An innovative model for strengthening community-based measures to curb violence against women and girls in Mansehra District, Pakistan"**. Khuwand e Kor worked at grass root level by organizing daily radio talk show campaigns, supporting legal rights activists in the district, organizing civil

rights and gender awareness campaigns for communities and arranging community-police sessions on various topics. Mansehra District was therefore suitable to explore the gaps identified in introduction.

4. Findings and Discussion

It is clear from our interviews and readings of policy documents that the relevant institutions in the government of Pakistan and civil society organizations are concerned with GBV and have taken several measures in addressing the GBV. However, there was a lack of concrete legal, institutional, and administrative initiatives by the government and other stakeholders. Our inquries uncovered some good work on the main causes and nature of GBV has been done mostly by civil society organizations. Most of this work, however, is scattered and has not led to a comprehensive approach and policy for handling GBV cases. Therefore, a need was felt to better understand GBV, the major actors related to GBV, the roles and responsibilities of GBV actors, the strength and weaknesses of GBV actors and the possibilities of developing ICTs for those actors for better coordination and response and prevention of GBV. The discussion below is divided into two sections. First, we will present the data from multiple dimensions to understand how GB is understood. We then move on to discuss the gaps in addressing GBV, and how ICT may play a role in improving the mechanisms through which women can seek security and protection.

4.1. Understanding of Gender-based Violence Issue in the Selected Area of KP

To understand the context in which women live in Mansehra, it is important to understand the societal norms and values of the area. The differentiation of gender roles and social division are present in classical patriarchal manner, which provides the foundation of society in rural areas especially. Women are mainly confined to the household, while men work in the public space

4.1.1. Women and Men Perceptions towards Domestic Violence

When we interviewed men and women in our study area about how they understand GBV, we came across very interesting insights.

One of the respondents on inquiring about GBV said that *'violence doesn't only come from the husband but sometimes husband's family is equally involved in inflicting the violence over women'*.

Domestic violence involves wide range of factor i.e. in most cases other members of the family are also involved. Another respondent illustrated that her husband is in middle east and she stays with her in laws. For her it's very tough to live with her in-laws in the absence of her husband because her husband always sides with his family and she faces

emotional and psychological abuse continuously. Similarly, she reflected that *"Domestic violence happens across economic classes and educational background. What matters the most is how men are brought up in the families"*. Another woman said *"I used to believe that domestic violence only existed in rural areas where people are less educated but few years back when I was working as a housekeeper I saw my master beating his wife brutally, though she was a well-educated and working woman. Only then I realized domestic violence is something every woman faces"*.

We also conducted focus group discussions of women belonging to lower socio-economic strata since majority of the population was poor in our study area. According to the participants of the focus groups the prevalence of violence is comparatively more in poor class than in middle class households. Poverty and economics play one of the major roles in boosting a toxic masculinity. If a man cannot fulfill the needs of the family, he ultimately takes out his frustration on the women in the family. One of the respondent narrated, *"It depends on the mood of my man, if he is stressed he behaves rudely or sometimes beats me"*. This is similar to the results of a study on attitudes to wife-beating in Cambodia, which suggests that women who are socio-economically dependent on their partners are more tolerant of partner abuse and are at greater risk of experiencing it. As illustrated by one women, *"We are dependent upon them for even our basic needs and being the disadvantaged spouse we have to bear domestic violence"*.

It is equally important to understand how men understand domestic violence since they are one of the main actors in the phenomenon. When we interviewed men and asked how they understand and define domestic violence, they were reluctant to talk about it. According to them domestic violence is a private matter and shouldn't be discussed in public and outside the house. Being part of a patriarchal society men hold access and exercise their will as they have structural power over women. In such circumstances even if the man is poor or unemployed he still dominates in all relationships. One of the respondents narrated that *"Women should be granted rights but I as a man would never allow women in my family to practice these rights in a way they challenge the gender roles"*. Most of male respondents were familiar with the term violence, and two of them believed that domestic violence had increased as the exposure of women has increased. According to them the information and access to internet and television should be controlled if this issue needs to be controlled. Another male respondent said that, *"Men in rural areas think that there is no benefit to educate daughters, because eventually they will wash dishes after marriage"*. Men strongly believe that the actual duty of women is to work inside the home not outside. Another respondent said that *"It's my responsibility to earn for my family not my wife's. Her sole responsibility is to look after me and my children and if she fails to do so then beating her is not violence because I have full rights on her"*. In Pakistan women have strict limitations regarding their thinking and movements. Another respondent narrated *"Women in our culture are not allowed to keep aside our norms and values and start opposing her husband. Because if she has no respect for her family honor then her husband has the rightful right to beat, scold or stop her if required"*. Whatever she does, she will keep the perceptions of her close male relatives such as brother, husbands and fathers in view [58].

Men irrespective of their economic class believed that domestic violence can either be acceptable and unacceptable based upon the situation. One respondent said that *"Domestic violence is not always the result of mal behavior of men, sometimes it can be the women because if she instigates a man to beat her than a man is left with no choice. Men don't get into violent behavior without any valid reason"*.

They all believed that giving education to women is important but that education should not challenge the gender roles ascribed by the society. A respondent illustrated *"We are not against education. As you have seen we send our girls to school and my own daughter is doing her bachelors but this does not mean that in the future if my daughter on the basis of her education challenge my authority I will let her do it"*.

Another man said that *"Since centuries it's been the woman who is responsible for making and breaking the house because if she is not ready to compromise then the wheel of marriage can't be run effectively. The environment of the house gets effected when she gets offended over petty things. For instance, once me and my wife had a fight and I accidentally pushed her. The result was she got a bruise and she went and complained to my in-laws. The result was they came in the evening demanding an apology from me. Before all this happened I was feeling guilty but after she involved other people in our private affair then she was the one to be blamed. Due to this my house environment was disturbed"*.

However, we met two men in the same community who were local activists and were attached to KK (khuwand-e-kor, a local organization) in project dealing with GBV. Both of these men were journalists by profession and were fulfilling their responsibility as a responsible citizen by doing social work in their respective communities. When we asked them why they think GBV is prevalent in the society, they explained it through economic lens arguing that in poverty brings innumerable evils with it and violence is one of them. If the rural communities are given full opportunities to establish their lives according to decent standards, this menace can be controlled. However, they couldn't see the power imbalance and patriarchy as a root cause of GBV. It illustrated that it need long term awareness sessions of the communities where they need to learn that how societies, rituals and customs are inherently gendered and patriarchal in nature. And how the power hierarchies need to be renegotiated.

Most of the men we spoke to thought that men are actively involved in domestic violence but they believed women provoke them to do violence. In a patriarchal society, the role of men is well established. To move towards a socially

and gender equitable society male engagement at all levels is important. In most cases men are agents of change or the gatekeepers and share equal responsibility towards gender equality. Patterns of gender inequality are borne out of stereotypical norms of masculinity and men's gender identities [59]. Without the involvement of men in the process of understanding the determinants of domestic violence against women, it is difficult to meaningfully improve the lives of women to promote sexual and reproductive rights as well as to identify measures involving men to reduce domestic violence against women [59]. The above discussion indicates that men mainly believe that domestic violence is a private affair and beating a wife for not obeying her husband is normal. Furthermore, many men believed that although they are educating their girls, that does not ensure that education can make her strong enough to eradicate domestic violence. Traditional norms and values also play their role in it.

4.2. Islamic Interpretations Impact on Violence

Throughout the country Islam is seen and followed with great respect but Islamic notions are stronger in rural area of Pakistan than urban areas. Islam is the driving narrative of different matters and in the case of domestic violence Islamic notions have a great deal to offer. Misinterpretation of different Islamic practices are quite common in rural areas. Islam is often used as a shield to defend different people's narratives, for example if a man beats his wife he comes up with the argument that Allah has made us responsible for you therefore he has the ownership rights over women. A respondent narrated that *"When my father used to beat my mother and my grandmother protested, my father justified the beating by saying that he is my mother's Majazi Khuda [60] and that disobeying or going against him is equaling to going against Allah"*. Mostly culture allows selective and "justified" physical punishment of a "deviant" wife [61]; similarly, many scholars describe wives as "habitually" suffering violence in the name of religion [62,63]. Women believed that how they were raised played an important role because tolerating violence was one of the key characteristics they are preached. Most of the men and women agreed that domestic violence is bad in all forms from minor to major and that women prior to education need to have basic knowledge about their rights. One of the lady health workers we interviewed narrated an incident where, *"A woman in the village filed a case against her husband in local police station. After launching the complaint, the woman faced irresistible resistance from her in-laws and her own parents. Eventually the whole matter was taken to the Jirga where she apologized to her husband for not respecting the privacy. The husband took her back in her house but till this date she gets beaten up by her husband regularly"*. She went on saying, *"the whole village knows about her suffering but no one can do anything about it. Had she been taken into protection by the police, her suffering might have ended"*.

Many women stated that all the matters in their lives are adopted according Islamic teachings. One of the woman said that, *"A husband can beat his wife because our religion permits him to do so"*. When asked to quote the reference she was clueless of whether this is narrated in Quran or Hadith [64]. She further explained that, *"We should not argue on matters of religion"*. When asked to explain the context she said that when a woman disobeys her husband, he is rightful to beat his wife. In addition, going to her parents' home without asking permission, not fulfilling husband's needs, and not looking after her home and kids, were enough reasons to get beaten. It indicates that Muslim women may have internalized one reading of Islam, which justifies wife beating for disloyalty or disobedience and the view that men's violence in marriage is a legitimate expression of patriarchal authority [65]. Another male respondent said *"Our religion permits us to beat our wife for her benefit because women don't have an insight of the outer world like we do. Therefore, stopping them by the use of force is not domestic violence"*. Another male said that *"Many of my relatives believe that when a wife is beaten the women is the one to be blamed because domestic violence occurs when a woman is being disobedient. Prior to the fact that disobeying their husbands is equaling to disobeying their Lord"*.

4.2.1. NGOs

In our study area Khuwand-e-kor (KK)[66], a local NGO was actively involved in dealing with domestic violence issues. Therefore, we interviewed staff from KK to understand their work and experience working with GBV in Mansehra District. KK has successfully run a project titled *"An innovative model for strengthening community-based measures to curb violence against women and girls in Mansehra District, Pakistan"* for 10 years. As mentioned earlier, Mansehra District is one of the largest and under privileged districts in Hazara division. Through KK's interventions 396 GBV cases were facilitated. KK arranged nearly 1000 community meetings to raise awareness among men and women about women's issues and provided legal assistance to those who needed it. In our research we explored that how KK has made community interventions, what strategies they designed and what challenges they faced. We visited Shinkiari Police station, since Shinkiari police station is one of the model police station that is set up with the help of KK. It is in a peripheral area and we examined how a police station located at a peripheral rural area functions, operates and deals with cases of GBV. We found that the police stations in small towns were very different in their appearance as compared to the model police stations in district headquarters. Only one woman police was on duty for the whole union council which is seriously inadequate if one looks at the areas size and population. Secondly, the women's help desk and the office where the women's complaint center was set up were in miserable condition. All the authority and the facilities were with the male SHO

inside the building.

In Mansehra, the status of women with respect to economic viability and education is not very promising. The staff in KK worked extensively to establish groups and committees of local men and women. The nominated committee members by the NGO based on their active role in the community were regularly called for meetings where they were assigned their respective roles and responsibilities. These selected men and women were given different ranks within committees like president, vice presidents, deputy. The men and women who were selected were active in the community like teachers, lawyers, lady health workers, and religious leaders. Special operating procedures were designed for the activities of community groups /committees. Proper bi-monthly meetings were conducted by these community groups where members would identify the issue, discuss the strategy to address the issue and then lobby with relevant actors for sustainable solutions. All the activities and meetings were properly documented and minutes of the meeting were mandatory to share with KK office in Mansehra city.

Working with violence and women rights is not an easy task in Mansehra district. KK started working in 2010 and they ran the project very successfully till 2013. KK named all the village groups and committees as *"KK area co-ordination Committee"*. When the project ended in 2013, KK handed over the project to the district government. District Government renamed the local groups/committees as *"Aman committee"* and these committees were allocated space in the Deputy Commissioner's office. The government operated it only for six months, and after that the committee disintegrated because there were many issues that were emerging within the community and without proper supervision (done previously by KK), the whole mechanism of involvement of local communities perished. In 2015 KK again started the project with the help of an international NGO. This time KK extended its services to police stations. KK has been involved extensively in police trainings. These trainings were initially arranged in KK offices, however, strong links have been established in police training units in Peshawar. Together with the police department they established 3 Model Police *Thana* (stations) in Mansehra i.e. one in main city, one in Shinkiari and one in Khaki. The international NGO signed an MOU with police department, and they hired six women police constables on the project payroll. This was reduced to three due to shortage of funds from the international NGO. Hiring of women police constables was a very flawed process that involved corruption and incompetency. For example, one of the female Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) hired the sister of her servant. She was on the international NGO's payroll and was working as a nanny for her boss' children for six months. There have been other serious issues as well, for example, lower staff get transferred every three months. This frequent transfers created impediments in the process /mechanism established by KK. Despite these challenges, KK worked closely with the police as an important stakeholder.

One question we posed to the KK staff was whether this grass root intervention and establishment of community mechanism helped in preventing gender-based violence. As a response one respondent narrated a story, *"One of the key stakeholders in this process were religious leaders, since religion has a major role in the lives of people living in rural areas. The religious leaders and scholars have access to the grass-roots of society. Thus, religious scholars are involved in the projects from the very beginning. Once the KK team wanted to intervene in one of the tough villages through religious leaders. The team head, who was a woman, started visiting the Maulana [religious leader] who was very well known in the area. She wanted his support in creating awareness regarding domestic violence. She visited Maulana innumerable times until he refused to meet her. After a few days Maulana nevertheless called her and had a meeting with her. He explained that t he needed some time to internalize what the KK team wanted to preach through him. He told the team head that he had seen members of his extended family committing violence against women. He felt that he first had to start by sensitizing them, and then he could do so to others in the village"*. Our respondent told us that there are many examples where community has started working closely with the KK. However, community participation and establishment of trust is a long and tedious process and be cannot achieved in a day. It requires long term planning and resources.

When asked about how reported cases of violence are handled in *thanas* [67], our respondent said that generally *thanas* are not well-trained in handling the victims in a sensitive way. When a victim comes to a *thanas* battered and wounded, he or she is sent to the district hospital for a medical checkup, because without a firsthand medical report the FIR cannot be launched. Ideally a women police constable accompanies the victim to the hospital. However, if female staff is not present then victim has to do it on her own. Similarly, if transport is not available in the *thanas*, then it is hired from outside, compromising the victim's identity. The victim then gets the report and comes back to the police station and launches the FIR. If the condition of the victim is at that point serious, then the female constable (if available), gets the victim admitted to the hospital. The police on duty in hospital (every hospital has a small police office in case of emergency) to keep an eye on the patient. If nobody is available at the hospital, then victim is left unattended and the female constable returns to the *thanas* to do the paperwork. In most of the cases the police themselves arrange a meeting with the husband and reconcile the couple as if it was a dispute. In most cases the argument put across is that its normal for a husband to beat the wife. There is a serious issue in considering violence a dispute. Because in police stations and in DRCs [68] all the cases that are registered for GBV are considered and executed as disputes between the couple. And the emphasis has always remained on reconciliation. However, GBV is still struggling to be recognized as crime.

4.2.2. Health Department

To understand the role of the Health Department in facilitating the GBV survivors to get a medical and legal help, interviews were conducted from the Head of Emergency Department Ayub Medical Complex and his team. He explained that the Government of Pakistan has developed a mechanism for GBV survivors to get legal and medical help. For example, the victim has to go to a government hospital to get a medico-legal report for filing an FIR in the police station. Without this report the complaint cannot be filed. The severe cases of GBV who come directly to medical hospitals for assistance are diverted by the doctors to the police guard established within the hospital. There the case is registered and only then doctors can give medical aid. GBV cases are not entertained by the medical staff of any government or private hospitals, or Basic Health Units (BHUs) without being reported to police. Ayub Medical Complex, which is biggest teaching hospital of Hazara Division, sees a huge number of GBV cases annually. Most of the cases that are treated in emergency department are of burns and poison. Inside the hospital there is a well-established police unit with regular police officers on duty 24/7. Currently, district government has increased the number of police officers placed in the hospital. There are six to eight female police officers who are present in the hospital in morning and evening shift along with male police. However, the situation becomes bleak as we move towards the BHUs, smaller hospitals and towards deprived districts where the health department and police department are relatively weak as compared to Abbottabad [69]. There the challenges of safety and security of medical staff and the victim increases. Our interviewee told us that in smaller hospitals doctors are threatened by the victims' families to not report the cases. There have been several incidents where doctors were kept hostages. Even in Ayub Medical Complex doctors on duty in Emergency are not safe. The Medical Officer on duty said, '*"The Government, while making policies for safety and security of GBV victims, should consider the security of the doctors who treat them because doctors are totally neglected in the process... How can we provide best services when we don't feel safe and secure"*. In addition, we have learnt from our interview with one of the NGO staff who works with police and GBV survivors that the victims who go to police station directly in remote areas for filing the complaint against violence are mostly sent to hospitals or BHUs for medico legal report alone, mostly due to unavailability of female staff or unavailability of other resources like transport. This represents a is high safety risk safety for victims.

We see that there are indeed mechanisms in place to assist GBV survivors: the Emergency Department of the hospitals are functional 24/7 every day of the year for treating all the emergency cases including GBV victims. Hospital administration together with police department have established police guards within hospitals to report the GBV cases instantly. The doctors on duty always produce honest medico-legal document upon examination. There are very thin chances that any doctor would produce fake certificate because this document is a legal document and can be challenged in the court. However, a formal documentation of the SOPs of the doctors working in emergency unit and with GBV survivors is not available, and may not even exist. The safety and security of the victims and the doctors and nurses on duty is not ensured either.

4.2.3. Social Welfare Department

The Social Welfare Department has the core responsibility of providing shelter to women who are victims of abuse and violence. The Government of Pakistan gives custody of these women to the department with the permission of a magistrate. The department then send these women to crisis centers and takes responsibility for their security during transport while pursuing their cases in courts. Once the women are handed to the department, their safety, shelter and food is the responsibility of the department. In addition, the department also facilitate the women who are fighting legal battles with their abusers. *Dar-ul-Aman*, or shelter homes, work directly under this department. The women who need instant shelter and security are directly sent to *Dar ul Aman*. These women live within the prescribed boundary, and are not allowed to leave the area until and unless permission is granted by the authorities.

Dar-ul-Aman, with their scarce resources, provide no psychological or financial help to survivors, although they do give interested women vocational training. The legal help that is given is also very slow and questionable since the social welfare department is not dealing with women only; working with charity and special children are also on their mandate. This affects the quality of attention needed to deal with GBV issue. There are no IT facilities at the department to help in their work. The district management officer acknowledged the importance of IT in general, but he was unable to comprehend how they might effectively use it in managing their system better. According to him the resources given to department are very limited for optimal functionality, and under such pressing conditions the department cannot afford to have an ICT facility. In addition, he said that the department is currently working on women, Islamic charity and needs of special children at the same time. It is difficult for the staff to comprehend and foresee how ICT might contribute to their work as long as their resources are so stretched.

Shockingly, the whole of Hazara Division has but one *Dar-ul-Aman*, which is entirely insufficient to cater the needs of GBV survivors. This *Dar-ul-Aman* was created in the late 1990s to facilitate the homeless women of Hazara division, who had no one else to care for them. The *Dar-ul-Aman* is overcrowded and very ill managed. This shows the non-seriousness of the government towards the issue, despite political rhetoric of attention to GBV issues. Also, women are not provided with any psychological support neither given any life management skills other than vocational training. There is no separate unit for women with children and

it is highly likely that most of the women with children go back to the abusive relationship. Crisis centers are considered safe places where women feel secure, however that is not the case according to many women who have lived within them. *Dar-ul-Aman* was created with the purpose of catering to the needs of homeless women, however over time this purpose has changed. Now the government runs all *Dar-ul-Aman* with strict rules and regulations, which only allow women who have court cases in process to live here. *Dar-ul-Aman* is a sub-type of shelter home in Pakistan. Several of the females who come to these shelter homes are runaways trying to escape from their unpleasant lives. *Dar-ul-Aman* can also act as home for occupants who wish to get away from their family, for this purpose the *Dar-ul-Aman* can momentarily ask for a court hearing. The danger to these women is often from their own families which makes it many times harder for them to go home.

The institutional hierarchy of *Dar-ul-Aman* is as stated by the Warden is that the residents report issues to the Warden (the highest rank in the shelter), the Warden further reports to the police Superintendent. The police Superintendent reports to the District Police Officer, whom reports to the Director. The director reports to the Secretariat, while the Secretariat reports to the Chief Secretariat, who then reports to the Minister. If the issue is of a minor nature the superintendent tries to solve it internally and when in need of external aid or assistance a board of director's meeting is called which works in an advisory position and can bring in donors. Furthermore, the residents can also report to the Superintendent directly by by-passing the warden if she feels the need.

When the warden was asked about the board of directors she stated that:

"No, we have an advisory committee. They offer guidance, it's not made at the provincial level we make it ourselves, but we must have a political leader on our board who can take our issues to the assembly. It is constituted locally and can have local donors, volunteers, lawyers any local figures that can help us."

In policy, *Dar-ul-Aman* are supposed to serve the women within it with health education and vocation training services. However, the educational services offered are only of a religious nature. Such institutions do not offer any modern, formal education, even though it is within its mandate. Similarly, the vocational services offered are the bare minimum with staff complaining that the equipment is old and faulty. Health services are offered extensively however, and if a patient wishes to go to a hospital an official court order must be approved. The Warden explained, *"This is a security issue—even if a girl is ill we are not allowed to take her to a hospital. I first have to call a DPO. If we have his permission, then he will send police or some other security to escort us to the hospital."* The institutions have a nurse present full time. Several guards are also on duty at all hours of the day to ensure the safety of the inmates.

There are obvious gaps between the policy document and the ground reality. The institutions are supposed to provide proper formal education but don't. The staff are perpetually overworked with some having served 72 hour shifts. Similarly, the staff employed are placed in the wrong institution. One member of the administration lamented on her lack of experience with women and how she had originally been appointed to the Children's Protection Unit (CPU). The NCI, a grade 9 officer, had the following to say:

"The work asked of us is different from the field in which we specialized. Wherever we NCIs are employed it is not in the right place, neither are we asked to do the tasks that comprise our job. I was employed for 7 years in a welfare home, then I was placed in the special children's home for 7 years, everywhere in welfare it is the same. I didn't even know a word about special children's education but I was posted there so I had to learn it."

4.2.4. Police

Majority of police personnel view reforms positively. According to them the reforms aim at winning public trust by serving the public and being accessible to them at all times. The reforms are multidimensional that ought to bring about operational, infrastructural ad institutional reforms for confidence building through improving efficiency and ensuring transparency and neutrality. The main features of the reforms as identified by the police personnel are:

- Capacity building of Police through establishment of 6 new specialized training school
- Structural improvements
- Establishment of Police Access Services (PAS) a portal that provides online access to public for registration of their complaints and for recording their feedback.
- Digitization of First information reports (FIRs)
- Easy access to information through official website of police
- Public access to Inspector General of Police (IG) and Deputy Inspector general of Police (DIG) through just an SMS (short Message Service)
- Establishment of Police Assistance Lines (PAL) offices
- Inclusion of technology such as Identity Verification System (IVS), Vehicle verification system (VVS), Criminal Record Verification system (CRVS), Call Data Record (CDR) and mobile forensic
- Tenant Information Act
- Tourist facilitation centers

According to the police personnel Police management has also been improved through managerial tasking. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Operational guidelines (OGs) and Policy guidelines (PGs) have been provided parallel to police rules. Police Act 2017 provides autonomy to police by providing tenure security and protection from external threats and also ensures accountability, transparency and neutrality through constant monitoring by District Assembly, provincial and public safety commissions. District council receive performance reports and daily situation reports from the police officers. Transfers, postings and

recruitments are now merit based freeing the police of negative influences. The act also gave legal cover to Dispute Resolution councils (DRCs) and Public Liaison Councils (PLCs). According to most of our police respondents, the technical reforms introduced in KP police are proving to be successful. The verification systems have made notable contributions in improving efficiency and have been made available at all checkpoints and barriers. However, irrespective off the initiatives that are taken in improving the police service through various initiatives and reforms there are still areas that need special attention and improvement. In our interviews we focused on how police understand and respond to cases of gender-based violence. As discussed earlier, the government has set up special women's desks for helping women complainants to launch their complaints smoothly, however, there are lots of administrative and social challenges that are faced not only by the women police but also the complainants. While interviewing women police we found that women police themselves don't feel secure and face significant problems, one of which is long working hours. Women officers usually have to stay late at work, and this is difficult, as they are responsible for not only their official duties but house management as well.

While interviewing, one of the woman police commented:

'Even at night in our homes we are on duty, whenever the situation requires us, especially while raiding a house we are being called.'

She further added:

'Although we are serving the nation and the people, society doesn't understand this, if we go out of our houses at odd times they will have bad comments regarding us, that we are not good women, or we do wrong things in the name of duty, etc.'

Another one commented;

'We know that it's the part of our job, we have to go when called out, at least this should be more systematic, as we have duties in the day time, or on specific days when we have been allocated a specific area and time, this should be for duties at night as well, so that when we have duty we stay in the police station, complete the duty hours and then have some break as well.'

The duty timings for women police are not only hard but also lack a proper system. During the data collection, most of the women police complained about this issue. They were of the view that instead of being on duty 24/7, specific duty hours should be allocated so that they can manage their duty hours properly. The initial purpose of establishing women police stations was to provide relief and support to the women who approach police with their problems and are unable to share them with the male police. In the beginning, the women police were allowed to register the complaint/FIR and proceed the action according to the nature of issue brought up. But unfortunately, just after 3-4 years of their establishment, they were being stopped from performing their main function; to listen the problems of women that they feel hesitant to share with males and to register the FIR. Why this was stopped is still not known by many people, as asked by both men and women police, they replied;

'There were some kind of problems while registering the FIR by women police, so it was stopped right after sometimes, but still women police are involved in every step.'

Taking charge of registering a complaint by the women police station might not seem a big issue, but it is actually limiting their authority and confining their power to take actions on their own. While most of the issues coming to the women police station are related to domestic violence, harassment, child abuse etc., which are better understood by women as compared to men, women police are not able to register the complaint by themselves. They have to send the complaint to the men police station where they have to explain the issue again to the male constable. Women police themselves want to get the authority to register FIRs and take action on their own, as one of the women police commented;

'Women know women better and they have sympathies and can relate to them. So, it would be better that we get the chance to listen to the complaint and take the required action on our own.'

When they were asked what else they do when they can't take any action or register the FIR, one of then narrated;

'We can at least listen to their complainant carefully, give some counseling and provide moral support to the victims. We try to give solutions to their problems that can be solved even without officially involving the police.' Detailed discussion with women police about their work environment and the issues they face in daily routines clarified that they themselves are facing multiple challenges in their daily work routines. In such a challenging work environment, it becomes rather difficult to ensure security of the victims. Therefore, we know from our research that police have been playing a very passive role in tackling issues related to gender-based violence. Moreover, the police have the mandate to take up cases of gender-based violence, but are not well trained and equipped. As reported by the woman police officer above, they council the women to solve their issues without involving police in it. Women mostly do not go to police stations for many reasons, which include; difficult procedures and the public environment of a police station, unapproachable attitudes of officers, lack of interest by the police in taking up cases of violence and especially domestic violence, and lastly, lack of trust that the police will implement the law. By law police are not allowed to arrest or hold a female victim overnight at a police station without a civil court judge's consent. The law requires a victim to complain directly to a session's court, which is considered a trial court for heinous offenses. After recording the victim's statement, the session's court judge officially lodges a complaint, after which police may then make arrests. NGOs reported the procedure created barriers for rape victims and domestic violence victims who could not afford to travel to or access the courts. NGOs

reported that rape and domestic violence was a severely underreported crime. Adding fuel to the existing problem is the sensitivity of the matter as most of the victims (women) are reluctant to talk openly about this issue. This may be because in the cultural context this matter is considered exclusively a private or family issue, and as we saw in the interviews with men, that women are often blamed; and it is believed as well that openly admitting the existence of such an issue would further deteriorate the situation resulting in divorce or honor killing [70].

Judiciary which has been given the mandate of hearing the pleas of women if they face any violence is acting as a puppet. Trial courts are supposed to give the verdict within three months of the institution of the FIR [First Information Report] while sometimes three more months are provided to decide upon the appeal. Defense and prosecution lawyers are not allowed to discuss the past or the character of a woman rape victim. New legislation has ensured a quick trial of rape cases, but enforcement is still lacking [71]. Despite numerous laws enacted in the past decade focusing on women's rights, as mentioned in DFAT, 2019, overall implementation of gender-based legislation lags, and the HRCP reported little substantive progress in 2017 on the rights of women and girls, particularly for females living in rural areas or settlements, those living with a disability. The fact that so many violent and unlawful practices persist and continue to escalate illustrates yet again the massive challenges to implementing the law and changing deeply entrenched societal attitudes. The government did not effectively enforce the 2006 Women's Protection Act, which brought the increase in crime of rape (USSD HR, 2018). Therefore, there is a huge need to explore innovative ways to address GBV at all levels and by multiple actors in Pakistan.

4.3. Challenges in the System and the Potential of Information Communication Technology

From our interviews of a broad set of stakeholders dealing with GBV issues, we can start to see some of the major gaps and challenges in how GBV is handled in Pakistan. These include low competence and awareness of GBV issues, lack of knowledge of women's rights and protection legislation, poor capacity, coordination and collaboration between multiple stakeholders, lack of SOPs which involve multiple actors involved in GBV response and prevention. From our analysis, we see that clear mechanisms need to be chalked out that not only connect the relevant actors involved in dealing, preventing and mitigating GBV but also help clarifying their roles and responsibilities to avoid overlap and confusion. We also found that there is no official documentation of any mechanisms at any level related to GBV. No SOPs are formulated, and documentation maintained.

After detailed discussion with all the relevant actors we see the scope of ICT in not only enhancing the efficiency and capacity of the institutions involved but also individuals

that are working in the system. Rather than developing a reporting application, which already is covered by hotlines and digital FIRs, a resource application would be more helpful in this complex setting. An application can be designed to assist and guide relevant actors but also act as a resource to link to existing applicationss, helplines, and relevant training material on GBV. Most of the existing reporting apps are owned by police and police departments are vigilantly working with people to spread awareness about their usage and the services they are providing. However, there is a dire need that provincial and district government launches such well-coordinated and well-informed system, because what we learnt in our research is that lack of political will creates irreconcilable impediments in mechanisms. For instance, the main issue Khuwand e kor faced at district level is lack of resources and political will to deal with GBV cases. Community members who are part of district level committees could not manage to stay intact without any economic benefit. People used to travel long distance to join meetings could not spend 1000 RS from their pockets just to attend the meeting. Volunteerism becomes difficult when there is poverty and no support from the government. Therefore, the staff of KK was very supportive of the idea to develop a mechanism/app that can connect all the relevant stakeholders together. They also suggested to develop a resource app where all the relevant laws, ordinances, training materials, and phones numbers of relevant actors are combined. The app should be designed in a way that local government officer should be part of it because ownership from the government is very important. When it comes to the police, in rural and semi urban areas police are often used as a political pawn and sensitive cases like GBV often used as political tool to gain fame by local politicians. Either local politicians increase their vote banks by creating hype around these issues or totally suppress the cases to win support of local gentry. In the former case the confidentiality of the victims and the families is compromised which further complicates the situation. Therefore, according to local activists the launching of app might help in execution of these cases smoothly and confidentially. However, they emphasized that local district management, and NGOs working on the issue should be part of the app; police should not be the major actor because police are not capable enough to deal with such sensitive issues. When local activists were asked about the use of ICT in their own work, they were in full support of launching, for example, an application that could connect a common person with the authorities through local community organizations where they can instantly report the incident and also track the progress of the complaint. One of the local activists said that an application might save time and also help in escaping the political pressure that comes with such sensitive cases. Police officers also supported the introduction of ICT in the system that can help in mitigating and preventing GBV at grass root level. Some community members have also used technology to support their situation. There was, for example, a young woman who was educated till 10th standard, whose hus-

band and in-laws were abusive. She endured the torture for some time, but since she had a smartphone and was well connected to her friends, she got to know about helpline services that were established to help women in abusive marriages. She launched a complaint against her husband and her husband was arrested. This incident created swirl in her village and the adjacent villages. When we asked about what happened after police arrested the husband, many said he was set free because the wife only wanted to threaten him.

There remain, however, many challenges in employing technology in a context where internet access, literacy and capacity is limited, and where people may not have experience using ICTs, or they have negative experiences. Also, the use of ICTs for GBV is something very new, and difficult for many people to grasp without being part of a reform process. As a part of our interviews, we asked both men and women in the communities to tell us if in their view ICT can help in solving and preventing the issue of GBV. It was initially very difficult for us to explain to women what we mean by ICT and how it might be relevant to GBV, however, once it was clear women came up with different opinions. Majority of the women we spoke to were uneducated and poor. They didn't have access to smart phones, internet and had mobility issues. One of the women said, "If we are given good work and our economic condition becomes better, the violence will be controlled too. The app cannot help us as much a money can". Similarly, there was another woman who quoted the incident of Kohistan [72] district where women were killed because they filmed themselves singing and clapping. She further said, "if we will use mobile for these purposes, we might face the same consequences." The responses of women showed that they realized that GBV is an issue, however, they see its codependence on factors such as economics and cultural norms. At the same time, women's agency in the area is so restricted that majority women don't have access to mobile phones.

Women is Pakistan faces domestic violence menace whether she lives in urban area or rural. According to the Human Rights Watch, gender-based violence occurs as a cause and consequence of gender inequities. GBV includes a range of violent acts mostly committed by men against women within the context of the subordinate status of females in society. When men were asked about the importance and relevance of ICT in the prevention of GBV, they had mixed responses. Some of them couldn't place the issue of GBV as a social issue as discussed above, and therefore did not see how ICT would be relevant.

Similarly, the doctors were dismissive of the idea of using IT in handling of GBV cases. According to them most of the cases which are reported or come to hospital are from very low socio/economic strata. These people do not have access to internet and smart phone. IT might not help these victims. In addition, there are more important steps that are required to be taken than making ICT the part of the whole process. For example, the mechanism of handling GBVs at hospitals, police stations and other relevant departments is not documented properly. Similarly, the SOPs of the doctors in emergency and on call during such cases are not documented /formulated. Doctors themselves feel insure/insecure while handling such cases. There are many incidents where mob attacked doctors and threatened them. Doctors want some concrete safety measures for themselves. In addition, ICT and related information and capacity building is not recognized by the system at large and also by the professionals who are working within these systems. During the interviews mostly doctors couldn't understand ICT. Courses on community and research methodology taken by doctors during their five-year MBBS study, for example, have no ICT component. In addition, the Welfare department and *Darul Amans* faced serious issues related to resource allocation, capacity building and presence of staff. There was a clear lack of understanding of the issues as the department was dealing with more than it can handle. Similarly, the condition of *Darul Amans* is no different. The staff there clearly indicated that they are not well trained and face innumerable financial and infrastructural challenges. In such pressing conditions, for them ICT is a luxury not a necessity. Lastly, the major stakeholder is the local police. In our research in Mansehra, we observed the Shinkiari police station was under-staffed and poorly equipped with facilities. There was one female constable in the police station and the workload and the area under the police station's jurisdiction is large. However, despite of huge operational challenges police officers welcomed the idea because police is already using ICT in their systems and have seen the positive outcomes of the technology usage. However, dealing GBV cases is complicated and requires competence not only professionally but contextual and in terms of trust as well.

5. Conclusion

In our research we identified the relevant actors involved in the GBV prevention mechanism and explored their roles and responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses, and the possibilities of using ICTs to improve coordination and response to Gender-Based Violence. From these interviews, we learned that the Pakistan police have limited competence in dealing with GBV issues, particularly at police station levels. They lack knowledge of laws, and of their role in dealing with victims and prevention. Both government institutions and civil society organizations are quite concerned with GBV and have taken a series of measures to address it. However, these measures tend to be more rhetorical than practical, and more concrete legal, institutional, administrative and practical mechanisms are required by all stakeholders. Nevertheless, some good work has been done on GBV, particularly by civil society organizations. For example, one NGO working with GBV for over 10 years developed a mechanism at the community level where local men and women formed village, union and tehsil level committees, and started intensive community awareness sessions on the issue. The NGO assisted these committees

in creating linkages with police stations and lawyers, and they were often trained together to create a common understanding of the issues. However, there is a clear challenge to include district management into this mechanism, as the local government is often unwilling to adjust existing practices without the buy-in from higher levels. And while such NGO efforts are promising, most of the work is isolated, scattered and has not led to a comprehensive approach and policy for handling GBV cases. In addition to learning how GBV is understood, our research has explored new ways of thinking about the use of ICTs for GBV response and prevention. It is commonly believed that the main way that ICT can be used to support survivors is through the establishment of hotlines and reporting apps. Our research shows, however, that these are only accessible to small number of urban-based women. There remain many barriers for survivors to use such options—and they cannot necessarily ensure the safety of survivors in the response system. There is instead a need to combine ICTs with the strengthening of social networks where men and women can find safe spaces within the communities to go and share

their issues, and be sure that they will receive the help and support needed to keep them safe. Those on the front lines dealing with GVB survivors, such as police, local health workers, teachers, and village activists, can develop these support networks, however they lack access to information and guidance on dealing with GBV issues in a coordinated manner. Even if they have participated in the few trainings available, follow-up is difficult. This is an area where ICTs could contribute as they could offer access to both information and guidance for each actor dealing with GVB, whether it is for response or prevention. But what is needed is real political will to invest in mechanisms that can truly make a difference.

Acknowledgments

References and Notes

[1] Niaz U. Violence against Women in South Asian Countries. Archives of Women's Mental Health. 2003;6(3):173–184. doi:10.1007/s00737-003-0171-9.

[2] Tahir M. Domestic Violence against Women in Pakistan and its Solution from an Islamic Perspective: A Critical and Analytical Study. Social Science Research Network. 2017;doi:10.2139/ssrn.2986723.

[3] Babur ZU. Violence Against Women in Pakistan: Current Realities and Strategies for Change [PhD Thesis]. Stadtschlaining, Austria;.

[4] Pakeeza S. Domestic Violence Laws and Practices in Pakistan. VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences. 2015;6(1). Available from: https://www.vfast.org/journals/index.php/VTESS/article/download/205/296.

[5] Preventing and Addressing Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Places of Deprivation of Liberty: Standards, Approaches and Examples from the OSCE Region. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; 2019. Available from: https://www.osce.org/odihr/427448.

[6] Thompson A. 15 Years of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences (1994-2009): A Critical Review. United Nations Organization; 2009.

[7] After recognizing its importance Pakistan has committed to end all kinds of violence against its citizens irrespective of gender, race, and religion. The Government of Pakistan recognizes that violence against women is a form of sex discrimination and that this is against the basic fundamentals of the Constitution of 1973 and has established a separate ministry of Women Development (MOWD) in 1989; to protect women and their rights. Similarly, Pakistan adopted Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996 and International Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) (Parveen, 2011). For details see http://www.cpdi-pakistan.org/ and https://www.justice.gov/.

[8] The Act amended to define karokari as murder, It gave a definition of the crime of 'honor' killing in the law that was absent in the PPC, Also, giving a woman in marriage or otherwise as badli-i-sulh has been specifically forbidden and a punishment has been prescribed in the law; Power to suspend or remit sentences in the case of honors crimes has been taken away from provincial governments. Women

Protection Act was promulgated in 2006; it excludes several provisions of the Hudood Ordinance and re-introduces them into Pakistan Penal Code 1860. The Eighteenth Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 2010 has redefined the structural contours of the state through a paradigm shift from a heavily centralized to a predominantly decentralized federation. In so far as the application of Human Rights is concerned, the Federal Ministry of Human Rights has the primary responsibility of reporting on the ratified international Conventions, as the coordinating body and to liaise with the provinces on human rights to ensure their coherence and alignment with international obligations. However, after the enactment of the Eighteenth Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2010, many responsibilities have been entrusted to provincial governments including implementation at the provincial level of international Human Rights treaties to which Pakistan is signatory. For details see kp.gov.pk / swkpk.gov.pk/ rutgerswpfpak.org.

[9] Important National Legislation adopted by Pakistan in light of its International Human Rights obligations are: The Women in Distress and Detention Fund Act 1996, The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, The Criminal Law Second Amendment (Acid and Burn) Act, 2011, The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Act 2011, National Commission for Human Rights Act 2012, and Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act 2016.

[10] The 18th Amendment (2010) devolved significant fiscal and political power to the provinces.

[11] Historically, there was very little attention to the rights of women and girls, with the exception of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929.

[12] Arab News (2019) https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1601636/pakistan.

[13] Development Advocate Pakistan. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); 2017. Available from: https://www.pk.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/DevelopmentPolicy/DAP%20Vol%204,%20Issue%204%20English%20final.pdf.

[14] Tadjbakhsh S, Chenoy A. Human Security: Concepts and Implications. vol. 51. Routledge; 2007.

[15] Timothy K. Human Security Discourse at the United Nations. Peace Review. 2004;16(1):19–24. doi:10.1080/1040265042000210102.

[16] Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); 1994. Available from: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-1994.

[17] Hoogensen G, Stuvøy K. Gender, Resistance and Human Security. Security Dialogue. 2006;37(2):207–228. doi:10.1177/0967010606066436.

[18] Leaning J. Psychological Well-Being over Time. Security Dialogue. 2004;35(3). doi:10.1177/096701060403500313.

[19] Mack A. A Signifier of Shared Values. Security Dialogue. 2004;35(3):366–367. doi:10.1177/096701060403500323.

[20] Hoogensen G, Gjørv GH. International Relations, Security and Jeremy Bentham. vol. 37. Psychology Press; 2005.

[21] Wolfers A. "National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol. Political Science Quarterly. 1952;67(4):481–502. doi:10.2307/2145138.

[22] for Women's Rights in Development AA. Feminist Eyes on Human security Workshop; 2002. Available from: http://www.awid.org/article.pl?sid=02/11/18/1916251&mode=thread.

[23] Gender and Armed Solidarity in a Divided World. 2006;.

[24] Das NR. Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World. Social Change. 2009;39(1):154–159. doi:10.18356/3300d265-en.

[25] Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action Camp Coordination and Camp Management Food Security and Agriculture Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery. Inter-Agency Standing Committee; 2015. Available from: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2015-iasc-gender-based-violence-guidelines_lo-res.pdf.

[26] World Health Organization Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses. World Health Organization; 2005.

[27] Violence against women. World Health Organization; 2017. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women.

[28] Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women: Taking Action and Generating Evidence. World Health Organization; 2010.

[29] Montesanti S. The Role of Structural and Interpersonal Violence in the Lives of Women: A Conceptual shift in Prevention of Gender-based Violence. BMC Women's Health. 2015;15. doi:10.1186/s12905-015-0247-5.

[30] Kishor S, Johnson K. Profiling Domestic Violence: A Multi-Country Study. Studies in Family Planning. 2005;36(3):259–261. Available from: https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/od31/od31.pdf.

[31] Galtung J. Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. Journal of Peace Research. 1969;6(3):167–191.

[32] Bourgois P. The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador. Ethnography. 2001;2(1):5–34. Available from: https://escholarship.org/content/qt8w69708b/qt8w69708b.pdf?t=lnq1lg.

[33] Hume M. Researching the Gendered Silences of Violence in El Salvador. IDS bulletin. 2009;40(3):78–85. doi:10.1111/j.1759-5436.2009.00042.x.

[34] Hume M. Terror as Usual': Uniting Past and Present Accounts of Violence. Bulletin of Latin American Research. 2007;28:81–109. doi:10.1111/j.1470-9856.2009.00326.x.

[35] Hume M. The myths of violence: Gender, conflict, and community in El Salvador. Latin American Perspectives. 2008;35(5):59–76. doi:10.1177/0094582X08321957.

[36] Theidon K. Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia. Human Rights Quarterly. 2009;31(1):1–34. doi:10.1353/hrq.0.0053.

[37] Suddle M. Police System of Pakistan. Lahore, PK: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT); 2015. Available from: http://www.millat.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/democracy/PoliceSystemofPakistan_PositionPaper.pdf.

[38] Hurst TP. Overwintering Ecology of Young-of-the-year Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*) in the Hudson River Estuary [PhD Thesis]. Stony Brook, NY, USA; 2000.

[39] Shinar D, Stiebel J. The Effectiveness of Stationary versus Moving Police Vehicles on Compliance with Speed Limit. Human Factors. 1986;28(3):365–371. doi:10.1177/001872088602800313.

[40] Sunshine J, Tyler TR. The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing [Journal Article]. Law and Society Review. 2003;37(3):513–548. doi:10.1111/1540-5893.3703002.

[41] Lea J, Young J. What is to be Done about Law and Order? Penguin Books; 1984.

[42] Goldsmith M. Research: Coaching for Behavioural Change. Business Strategy Review. 2003;14(3). Available from: https://www.marshallgoldsmith.com/articles/coaching-for-behavioral-change-2/.

[43] Weitzer RJ. Policing under Fire: Ethnic Conflict and Police-community Relations in Northern Ireland. Suny Press; 1995.

[44] Rose R, Misher W. Positive "Party Identification in Postcomunist Contries". Electoral Studies. 1998;17(2). doi:10.1016/S0261-3794(98)00016-X.

[45] Hussain J. Police Plan Steps to Restore Public Confidence. The Nation. 2010 Nov 2; Available from: https://nation.com.pk/02-Nov-2010/police-plan-steps-to-restore-public-confidence.

[46] Denney L, Jenkins S. Securing Communities: The What and the How of Community Policing. Overseas Development Institute Background Paper. 2013; Available from: https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library2/Policy-and-Research-Papers/Securing-Communities-The-What-and-the-How-of-Community-Policing2.

[47] Somerville P. Understanding Community Policing. Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies Management. 2009;32(2):261–277. doi:10.1108/13639510910958172.

[48] Hudson C, Pring R. Report on the Preventative Policing Initiative based in Five Oxfordshire Secondary Schools. University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies; 2000.

[49] Abbas H. Stabilizing Pakistan through Police Reform. Asia Society Washington; 2012.

[50] Report by the Independent Commission on Pakistan Police Reform', 'Stabilizing Pakistan through Police Reform'; 2008. Available from: https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/stabilizing-pakistan-through-police-reform.

[51] Margaret R. Definition of Information Communication Technology: TechTarget. Current Anthropology. 2007; Available from: https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/ICT-information-and-communications-technology-or-technologies.

[52] Yigitcanlar T. Bridging the gap between citizens and local authorities via e-government. In: Proceedings of the Symposium on E-government: Opportunities and Challenges; 2003. pp. 1–16. Available from: https://eprints.qut.edu.au/26226/.

[53] Nawab B, Ullah S, Nyborg I, Maqsood T. Community-Oriented Policing: Political, Institutional and Technical Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police. Journal of Human Security. 2019;15(2):41–53. doi:10.12924/johs2019.15020041.

[54] Maqsood T, Madani SA, Nawab B, Ullah S, Nyborg I. Role of ICT in Community-Oriented Policing in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities. Journal of Human Security. 2019;15(2):21–40. doi:10.12924/johs2019.15020021.

[55] Memmi D. Information Technology as Social Phenomenon. AI & Society. 2015;30(2):207–214. doi:10.1007/s00146-014-0565-4.

[56] Available from: https://www.lgkp.gov.pk/districts/district-mansehra/.

[57] A tehsil is an administrative division consisting of an area of land with a city or town that serves as its headquarters, with possible additional towns, and usually a number of villages.

[58] Kabeer N. Between Affiliation and Autonomy: Navigating Pathways of Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice in Rural Bangladesh. Development Change. 2011;42(2):499–528. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01703.x.

[59] Connell RW. Masculinities, Change, and Conflict in Global Society: Thinking about the Future of Men's Studies. The Journal of Men's Studies. 2003;11(3):249–266. doi:10.3149/jms.1103.249.

[60] God in this world.

[61] Fikree FF, Razzak JA, Durocher J. Attitudes of Pakistani Men to Domestic Violence: A Study from Karachi, Pakistan. Journal of Men's Health Gender. 2005;2(1):49–58. doi:10.1016/j.jmhg.2005.01.004.

[62] Hajjar L. Religion, State Power, and Domestic Violence in Muslim Societies: A Framework for Comparative Analysis. Law Social Inquiry. 2004;29(1):1–38. doi:10.1111/j.1747-4469.2004.tb00329.x.

[63] Haj-Yahia MM. Attitudes of Arab Women toward Different Patterns of Coping with Wife Abuse. Journal of Interpersonal Violence. 2002;17(7):721–745.

[64] Sayings of Prophet.

[65] Kalmuss DS, Straus MA. Wife's Marital Dependency and Wife Abuse. Journal of Marriage the Family. 1982;44:277–286.

[66] Currently all the activities of KK are suspended due to non-extension of NOC (Non-Objection Certificate).

[67] Police station.

[68] District resolution counsels.

[69] The capital city of Hazara Division.

[70] Niazi SM. Khul'a and the Shariah. International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science. 2012;4(4):27–34. Available from: https://ijlass.org/data/frontImages/gallery/Vol._4_No._4/4._27-34.pdf.

[71] Zaman S, Zia M. How much Rape is Rape: Understanding Normative Assumptions within Rape Victimology in Pakistan. Disputed Legacies: The Pakistan Papers. 2018;pp. 155–213.

[72] One of the poorest and underprivileged districts of Hazara Division.