RESILIENCE, COMMUNITY SECURITY AND SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH EFFECTIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

A UN WOMEN RESEARCH STUDY

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UN WOMEN

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AASHA	Alliance Against Sexual Harassment
ANP	Awami National Party
BCVTA	Balochistan Civilian Victims of Terrorism (Relief and Rehabilitation) Act 2014
CNIC	Computerised National Identity Card
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPCSW	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission for the Status of Women
MOS	Measure of Size
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MLEA	Members of Law Enforcement Agencies
NAP	National Action Plan
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCSW	National Commission for the Status of Women
NACTA	National Counter Terrorism Authority
NDU	National Defence University
NISP	National Internal Security Policy
NPB	National Police Bureau
NSD	National Security Division
NUST	National University of Sciences and Technology
PAIMAN	Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and New-borns
PIPS	Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
RIM	Random Iterative Method
TNFZ	Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi
TTP	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNWOMEN	United Nations Women

Note by the Country Representative Sharmeela Rassool

Contributing towards and creating more cohesive communities and addressing emerging community security threats is a growing area of mandated work for UN Women under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015). The question of women's role in violent conflict and peace-building has been much debated in the academic and development literature. With the UN and other international bodies prioritizing the inclusion of a "gender-focused" agenda in their wider remits of peace-building and security, focus has turned towards the various ways in which gender-specific interventions can advance (or hinder) the cause of peace and social cohesion.

The UN Women mandated knowledge product titled: "Resilience, Community Security, and Social Cohesion through Effective Women's Leadership" was developed with an aim to identify knowledge gaps in the current research available regarding community security and social cohesion from a gendered lens. Primary research was conducted to add to the existing knowledge base on factors undermining community security and social cohesion and its effects on women's voices and representation. Moreover, vulnerabilities of women and gendered drivers that may contribute to security threats and fragmentations of social cohesion which increases the impact of violent extremism were analyzed in detail. Contexts and factors which may cause deep rooted ideologies and mobilization of women and young women, and the roles of women/ young women in preventing and contributing towards violent extremism were thoroughly researched and identified.

The main focus of this research study is essentially on women and the social, economic and political system in which they are embedded. Theoretically, this can be understood as the classic structure-agency dichotomy where women may exercise agency but are also constrained by the structural impediments. The structural realities such as patriarchy, prevalence of extremist ideologies, political violence, lack of economic opportunities affect women in a variety of way. It is important to understand their unique vulnerability to extremist ideas and the peculiar impacts extremism has on women. At the same time, it is also important to understand how women can exercise their agency to resist extremism and what are the capacities that they need in order to do this.

This study encapsulates patterns of conflict and extremism across different regions of Pakistan and aims to understand the structural realities that shape women's worldview and behavior as well as the factors that may help them deal with intense extremism. It is the nuanced understanding of the various factors that determine the interplay between this structure-agency duality that may lead to policy recommendations aimed at reshaping social realities.

UN Women country offices and headquarters undertake significant work in cutting edge research, engaging and collaborating with academics, civil society, and other non-governmental partners to ensure the creation of credible resources, research, and knowledge products. The knowledge product on gendered drivers of violent extremism has also been developed with an objective to inform the government and relevant stakeholders about the systematic vulnerabilities that exist in the societal as well as personal level which result in extremist tendencies. We hope this comprehensive exercise results in generating evidence which will guide the policy making process and decision making at the government level to effectively tackle this pertinent issue.

Executive Summary

This study analyses the gendered aspects of the ethnic and religious conflict in Pakistan that can potentially lead to a breakdown of social cohesion and stability. There was a focus on how women are affected by and implicated in situations of conflict and violence. Instances of social cohesion breakdown were particularly revealing in this regard as they can both exacerbate gendered oppression and provide opportunities for emergence of new layers of community leadership, including women. Women-specific factors in enhancing security, social cohesion, policy-making and implementation were also studied.

The study utilised a mix of quantitative surveys, Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informant Interview with experts and practitioners in the field of security policy and implementation. The survey, FGDs, and KIIs were conducted with women citizens, policy-makers, and experts in both rural and urban areas of all four provinces of Pakistan. The women respondents in FGDs and surveys were overwhelmingly from lower-middle class and working class backgrounds.

The study showed how patriarchal social structures condition women's involvement in situations of escalating conflict and decreasing social cohesion. There are wider social changes afoot in Pakistan – such as increasing entry of women into paid labour force, urbanisation, macroeconomic uncertainty, and changing aspirations – which herald a change in gender and familial relations. However, the persistence of patriarchal norms and values – such as high incidence of domestic violence and barriers to women's mobility – makes avenues for expression and leadership for women difficult and often unsustainable.

In such a situation, extremist organisations often prey upon social faultlines through offering a mirage of prestige, agency, and/or economic empowerment to excluded social groups, including women. Some women thus join the conflict as active perpetrators due to a combination of social, political, and ideological factors (such as the lure of organisational prestige, breaking familial restrictions, and asserting leadership qualities). Gender-specific recruitment is carried out by extremist organisations and there are path-dependencies involved in women's involvement in these organisations which make getting out difficult and dangerous.

Conflicts also have the effect of hardening gendered social boundaries, with women's bodies becoming particular sites for claim-making and policing by different contesting parties. Breakdown in social cohesion and rise in conflict was seen to increase policing of women's bodies, decrease economic stability, increase vulnerability to sexual exploitation and child marriages, and rampant mental health and trauma issues.

Conflict, however, also presents events where stabilised social structures are disturbed thereby providing opportunities for leadership to hitherto excluded groups. In different regions and contexts in Pakistan, women have asserted leadership in conflict and post-conflict situations. Often women's involvement was triggered by the conflict penetrating the sphere of the household and social reproduction. However, most of the time, women's leadership during and post conflict was a "fire-fighting" response which drew upon essentialised notions of femininity (for example, as "mothers", "daughters" etc.), with traditional norms being re-asserted post-conflict. The effectiveness of women's leadership during conflict is crucially conditioned by the types of networks they are able to mobilise and draw upon in the sphere of civil and political society. Relatedly, sustainability of women's leadership and their contribution to social cohesion is integrally determined by the redistribution of material resources (such as property, land, financial assets) during and after conflict.

"I believe women's voices are the communities' voices, they can consistently bridge divides, build support for understanding among communities, promote dialogue and build trust if given the knowledge, skill and opportunities. Whether preventing violent extremism, contributing to interfaith harmony, responding to emergencies like COVID women take an inclusive approach. Therefore, I always insist on integrating women's participation, leadership and empowerment in developing strategies to prevent violent extremism and we must address existing prejudices and empower women to become leaders and change makers."

Mosarrat Qadeem
Executive Director Paiman

At the level of the state and policy-making, there is an increasing recognition of the problem of violent extremism in Pakistan and the need for promoting social cohesion. However, both the conceptualisation of the problems, their diagnosis, and formulation/ implementation of solutions is hampered by lack of inclusion of women-sensitive perspectives in security policy-making and implementation. In this regard, there is an urgent need to understand the specific place of women in situations of conflict, especially with regard to state restitution mechanisms for victims. Moreover, while there is an increasing involvement of women in the state and non-state security sphere, changes are required at institutional level to facilitate women's active – instead of passive – involvement and their effective input.

The study recommends a range of general, programmatic, and institutional recommendations for recognising, increasing, and facilitating women's effective role in promoting social cohesion and countering insecurity/extremism. These recommendations range from policy proposals targeted at gendered victims of violent extremism, to increasing women's engagement at the state-society interface, and institutional reforms in law enforcement agencies to integrate women more effectively into security policy-making and implementation.

Rationale

Contributing towards and creating more cohesive communities and addressing emerging community security threats is a growing area of mandated work for UN Women under its strategic plan 2018 – 2021, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015). With regards to Pakistan, several issues are particularly important with regard to women's involvement in conflict and insecurity. These include control and subjugation of women and girls, using gender stereotypes to persuade and recruit them to conduct criminal activities, while it is also understood that women can also adopt a criminal identity without duress and coercion. Such mobilization to conduct forceful actions contribute to undoing generations of progress on the respect and promotion of women's rights. Achieving gender equality and women empowerment is a target goal in and of itself, it is also imperative to achieve this goal in fulfilling the UN priority agenda of sustaining peace, Agenda 2030, and the women, peace and security. This includes efforts to stem out community security threats that jeopardize the peaceful co-existing of communities, and to prevent the expansion of violent and extremist politically driven activities. Women as holders of rights must be included in decision making platforms, and to represent their communities in efforts seeking to strengthen and sustain peace at the local and national levels. Facilitating and promoting active engagement of women in policy platforms and processes contributes to progress towards achieving gender equality, and to prevention of violence and conflict in Pakistan. Due to various forms of conflict, Pakistan has lost more than 60,000 lives in the post-9/11 decades. Moreover, these conflicts have involved and particularly impacted women in particular ways which need to be investigated and understood. Therefore, the intended research aims to identify the various stages of inculcating deep-rooted discriminatory attitudes and violence among women to formulate a strategy that can effectively address tensions at the community level, and to promote gender equality.

"Women make up almost half of the world's population. The debate around peace and security is incomplete without them. Inclusive policy making is the only way forward. The future is female."

Amna Baig
Islamabad Capital Territory Police

Purpose and Objectives of Study

In order to effectively understand the drivers of conflict and collect evidence on factors which threaten community security and social cohesion focusing on women and young women - UN Women commissioned a research study titled: "Resilience, Community Security and Social Cohesion through Effective Women's Leadership".

The main purpose of the study is to build an evidence base to develop a knowledge product with an aim to enrich the available knowledge base on community security. Consequently, the knowledge product will be used for advocacy and awareness-raising on the role of women in strengthening community resilience and social cohesion in the Pakistani society.

The research study employed mixed methods research in the form of both primary data collection (Individual Surveys, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews) and secondary research. These were analysed to identify factors undermining community security and social cohesion and its effects on women's voices and representation. Moreover, it also aimed to explore vulnerabilities of women and gendered drivers that may contribute to security threats and fragmentations of social cohesion which intensify the impact of violence. Furthermore, an examination of contexts and factors stemming from deep rooted ideologies, resulting in mobilization of women/young women was conducted. Lastly, the roles women/young women play in preventing and contributing towards violence were studied.

Structural realities such as patriarchy, prevalence of extremist ideologies, political violence, lack of economic opportunities etc. affect women in a variety of ways. It is important to understand their unique vulnerability to extremist ideas and the peculiar impacts extremism has on women. At the same time, it is also important to understand how women can exercise their agency to resist extremism and what are the capacities that they need in order to do this. This study aims to understand the structural realities that shape women's worldview and behaviour as well as the factors that may help them deal with intense extremism.

> "Sustainable peace will remain an illusion if women are not included in processes focusing on transforming conflict and addressing challenges of violent extremism."
>
> Muhammad Ali Babakhel
> DG Research NACTA

SECTION 1

Background

The question of women's role in violent conflict and peace-building[1] has been much debated in the academic and development literature. With the UN and other international bodies prioritising the inclusion of a "gender-focused" agenda in their wider remits of peace-building, sustaining peace, and security, focus has turned towards the various ways in which gender-specific interventions can advance (or regress) the cause of peace and social cohesion.[2]

UN Women advocates for and supports women leadership in all public spheres using a Human Rights Based Approach[3] (HRBA), which aims to eliminate or at least diminish the impediments of existing exclusion and discrimination within the implementation of any programme or project.In fact, the protection of women in conflict zones and their inclusion in the peace-making process in conflict areas has been institutionalized as part of international law via the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in October 2000 (Naraghi-Anderlini, 2001) and its subsequent six resolutions.[4] Steps in this regard have varied from increasing the representation of women in decision- and policy-making bodies, to more targeted measures with regards to building the capacity of women's leadership at various (including grassroots) levels.

> A gender equal society is a more peaceful society - especially, equitable number of women in leadership roles is key to resolving social conflicts of varying nature. It is therefore important to adopt affirmative action for meaningfully incorporating women voices at decision making fora to achieve sustainable peace.
>
> Dr. Adnan Rafiq
> Country Representative
> United States Institute for Peace (USIP)

However, while states and conflict parties have made rhetorical commitments to greater inclusion of women in peace and reconstruction processes, these are often not followed through in practice. In fact, even international agencies too often fail in following up on commitments to gender equity in their peace-making missions (Charlesworth, 2008). Moreover, in cases where women have been able to procure a prominent seat at the table of peace-making and reconstruction (for example in various African parliaments), prevailing constraints often prevent meaningful contribution of women members (eds. Ballington and Karam, 2005).

The efforts to promote women's leadership in peace and security decision-making raise key conceptual

1 There is no set definition of peace-building/peace-making. However, peace-building often happens after conflict has ended, or possibly such activities might start even during conflict. Broadly, it concerns conflict resolution through non-violent measures (United Nations, 2010).

2 There is no single definition of social cohesion. Broadly, social cohesion refers to individuals within a community coexisting peacefully with each other, regardless of background, ethnicity or religion (See Stanley, 2003). Furthermore, there can be a breakdown in social cohesion, for example which can result because of conflict and violent actions.

3 The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a conceptual framework based on international human rights standards and directed towards promoting and protecting human rights. HRBA seeks to analyse the inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress. HRBA is concerned with empowering people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.

4 Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions/security-council

questions. Firstly, there is the issue of specifying women's specific stakes in the process of peace-*and* conflict-making. As has been noticed by several commentators, the international commitment to women's leadership in peace-making often draws upon – unstated – underlying assumptions with regards to women's *innate* predisposition and/or incentives towards peace and conflict resolution (Charlesworth, 2008). Inadvertently, these arguments draw upon more essentialist arguments (in the cultural and/or even biological register) about gender dispositions, roles, and attitudes towards conflict (for example, see Fukuyama, 1998).

However, such arguments for gendered approaches towards conflict can be double-edged. For example, during conflicts in Solomon Islands and East Timors, women's prevailing perception as "peace-makers" helped them assume critical importance during the peace-building process. However, the tying of "peace-making" to their role as "mothers" and "nurturers" also led to foreclosure possibilities of meaningful representation and voice once peace prevailed (Corrin, 2008). Thus, while cultural essentialism can be a powerful tool to enhance women's role in conflict-ridden societies, this can be a double-edged sword to sequester women into "traditional" roles once conflict has ended.

A second issue is one of invoking– ethical and moral – argument of women's equality during conflict and peace-building based in international human rights frameworks. However, this approach leads into very practical and real difficulties with regard to generalized patriarchal structures around the world. In this regard, more abstract and universalised claims to women's equality can provide grist to moral claims, but often are not enough to challenge deeply-rooted structural and historical constraints to women's equality and self-determination.

To a large extent, the negotiation between these two – overlapping but distinct – approaches to advocacy of women's leadership and inclusion in peace-building and social cohesion initiatives is formed in specific situations and practice. Thus, where women have taken up leading roles in promoting peace and social cohesion during and after conflict, this has been due to conjunctural effects of the dynamics of conflict intermingling with specific pre-conflict structures of power and hierarchy in the said communities.

For example, in Somalia and Somaliland during the 1990s, women were taking up a prominent, "sixth clan" role in peace-building among the five major clans involved in civil war (Timmons, 2004). This prominent position of women was in turn associated with the specific patterns of inter-clan marriage and property inheritance which had prevailed in Somalia in the pre-war era. In this context, the convulsions of war and the destruction of the Somali household allowed women to mobilize different networks of kinship for provision of social welfare and conflict-ameliorating negotiation. Relatedly, during the conflict between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville in Pacific Asia in the 1980s and 1990s, women were able to assume prominent roles in the peace process (Saovana-Spriggs, 2007). The critical factor here was Bougainville's matriarchal traditions whereby women were traditional owners of land and could become chiefs. While these matrilineal traditions had been eroded by colonialism, conflict and war allowed space for older practices to re-emerge. Thus, in the immediate peace-building process, women attained key leadership positions

However, while women gain and avail opportunities for leadership that are produced by conflict, this does not necessarily translate into substantive gains in the spheres of civil and political society. Thus, in Somalia, while women were able to gain reserved seats in parliament, these were later substantially decreased (El-Bushra, 2007). Studies have pointed to prevailing sexist attitudes and "inherent institutional masculinity" within state bodies (such as parliaments) as a barrier to women's participation in parliamentary processes even where in terms of numbers they might have a substantial presence (African parliament handbook).

Samar Bilour: Politician and Member Provincial Assembly KPK

Samar Bilour is a Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from PK-74 belonging to the well-known Bilour family of Peshawar. Following the assassination of her husband, Haroon Bilour, she was given a ticket by the Awami National Party (ANP) to contest the election from his constituency. She won the election after a tough contest with the ruling party candidate belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI). In the process, she became the only woman in KPK province to win a direct election on a Provincial Assembly general seat in the last sixteen years.

Senior Awami National Party (ANP) leader Barrister Haroon Bilour and thirteen other people lost their lives, with at least 45 others wounded, when a suicide bomber targeted an election rally in Peshawar's central Yakatoot area on 12th July 2018, just 14 days before the national elections. This was not the first time the Bilour family was targeted. In December 2012, Haroon Bilour's father, Bashir Ahmad Bilour, a former Senior Minister and ANP leader, was also martyred in a suicide attack in Qissa Khwani Bazaar in Peshawar. Haroon was contesting election from the same constituency which his father had previously represented.

In the backdrop of this violence faced by her family, Samar Bilour emerged as a leader for her party becoming the first woman in the last sixteen years to win a directly elected general seat from Peshawar city in the KPK Provincial Assembly.

Samar Bilour's victory signifies a gradual change in gender norms, especially in urban areas such as Peshawar city. Her success in the elections is evidence that men are willing to accept women leaders in areas such as KPK where female representation in leadership positions is generally lacking. She emphasized that without the support of her party this success would not have been possible.

As member of the Provincial Assembly, Samar Bilour advocates the need for women in decision making roles. In her interview, she stated that:

"We follow a democratic system where there is now a reserved quota for women. There is a token presence of women in all the assemblies. However, in KPK, I find it upsetting; as the current government has a 70 percent majority and have a large number of female MPAs and yet there are no women in the cabinet or in an advisory role. There are no women in KPK in a leading position."

Emerging women's leaderships can draw upon both essentialist/culturalist assumptions and normative-universal claims with regards to asserting their role in conflict/peace. This provides us an alternative avenue of investigation, instead of going in with set assumptions about women's "innate" tendencies or interests towards peace or conflict, or, conversely, the effectivity of universalist claims about women's equality. In fact, what is most important is to understand the prevailing social structures, histories, and conflict dynamics in which women's leaderships have emerged or not. While at the same time recognizing the universally acknowledged rights that women have to participate equitably in decision making. As such, concrete investigation of social-historical structures and a grounded view of women's agency moves us beyond both ontological and normative claims with regards to women's capacities and interests.

In light of the above, two important points must be noted that are key sources of research questions for our study. Firstly, with regard to peace-making, the role of

> There is a dire need to evolve from a hyper-masculinized vision of counterterrorism, recognizing women's agency independent of gender biases; the current vision is not equipped to respond to the ever-evolving security landscape of the country.

Sheharyar Khan
Conflict and P/CVE Expert

conflict and its effects on incumbent social structures is crucial. While conflicts (especially, forceful conflicts) are times of distress for the community as a whole, they also impact prevailing social structures deeply. Often, the multi-level ruptures (political, economic, social, and cultural) provoked by fierce conflicts can create space for the assertion of newly ascendant social groups or even more ferocious reaction by reigning dominant groups. As a result, and as seen in the examples above, conflict-ridden societies offer great vantage points to study and understand the emergence (or lack thereof) of women's leadership and its effectiveness in ameliorating conflict/building peace.

In this regard, Pakistan and its various regions offer a very productive avenue for further exploration of the relation between conflict, security, resilience, and women's leadership. Pakistan is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country, thereby requiring any explorations into social cohesion and women's leadership to capture the necessary nuances inherent in such a pluri-national country. Pakistan has undergone massive and varied forms of social upheaval and conflict over the last two decades. Foremost among these have been aggressive conflicts along the lines of fundamentalist terrorism, religious sectarianism and ethnicity. In this regard, there is evidence of women responding in different ways to such conflicts. For example, Hazara women of Quetta have stepped forward as major articulators of community distress in face of sectarian violence. On the other hand, young and university-going women in core urban areas have also been attracted to fundamentalist outfits. Moreover, the anti-war movement in Pashtun areas has also centered women's leadership in highly patriarchal contexts.

A contextualisation of Pakistan's history is important to understand the various factors and roots of disharmony currently prevalent in the country with a focus on gender. While this Study reveals the regional and contextual variation of the factors, forms and impact of disharmony and conflict, an understanding of

the larger political economy of Pakistan and its history sheds light on the power structures that perpetuate marginalization and disempowerment. Firstly, due to British colonial legacy, areas in Pakistan still serve as reservoirs of martial recruitment and there is a preponderance of militarism due to the British Raj's practices of drawing on Pakistani people for its armies (Synnott, 2010). Imperialist policies not only created militarised power structures, but also imputed certain gendered notions of masculinity and femininity. The British act of colonization and 'penetration' of Indian lands was a gendered manifestation of 'masculinity' which is aspired to even today (Levine, 2010).

Pakistan's creation saw one of the most significant mass migrations in world history. However, in contrast to India, Pakistan had no pre-existing national identity (Synnott, 2010). It is also important to note that Pakistan is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country with major ethnic groups including Punjabi, Pashtun, Sindhi, Siraiki, Baloch, Hazara, Burusho, Balti and Sheedi etc (CIA World Factbook, 2010). While the ethnic and linguistic pluralism of Pakistan exhibits the enriched culture and heritage of this land, its gendered ramifications are important to note. Almost all ethnic and linguistic communities in Pakistan are marred by their own set of patriarchal practices that impact women and girls differently in case of conflict. Furthermore, as women and girls are generally considered to be vessels of their community honour, any conflict between these groups exacerbates into extremist violence, including sexual violence, for women and girls.

In light of such diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, Pakistan's formulation of a narrowed national identity seeks to unify the country under a unitary religious identity (FES, 2015). However, marginalization is suffered by persons belonging from religious minorities in Pakistan where Muslim population is above 95%. Further discriminated within religious minorities are women, especially those from lower caste Christian and Hindu backgrounds, who bear the brunt of multiple discriminations and a state which is non-responsive to their needs and rights.

Pakistan's state structure and constitutional governance is another aspect to analyse to truly understand social cohesion and its gendered ramifications. Centralisation of power and resources in Pakistan, until the 18th constitutional amendment in 2010, had perpetually excluded citizens residing in the under-developed provinces, especially women, from meaningful political participation. This disenfranchisement of women from political structures is a contributing factor for violent extremism[5] in the country impacting women's social contract with the state (Malik, 2013). Women generally in Pakistan have suffered and have had their personal freedoms restricted due to state policies. The most overt of these policies were those introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq reduced women's testimony in judicial matters to half that of a man, introduced the draconian Hudood Ordinance which resulted in rape victims being tried for fornication or adultery, and introduced blasphemy laws stipulating harsher punishments. Therefore, extremism in Pakistan has disproportionately impacted women and girls and curtailed their fundamental freedoms and rights under some circumstances while actively persecuting women and girls' victims of sexual violence in other circumstances.

A gendered understanding of violent extremism or breakdown in social cohesion requires an understanding of the sociological background of gender based crimes in any society. Gender based violence is a predisposing condition for sexual and gender based violence in contexts of conflicts and is a principle reason why women and girls in countries with high levels of gender based discrimination and

5 Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon and is not exclusive to any region, nationality or belief system. A definition of a violent extremist actor is one that has ideological opposition and uses violence to express this. Preventing Violent Extremism can be defined as systematic and preventative measures to address the drivers of violent extremism directly (See Brown, 2019). The terms "Preventing Violent Extremism" and "Countering Violent Extremism" are often used interchangeably due to considerable overlap.

inequality are at a much greater risk of victimisation from the onset to the aftermath of the conflict (Leatherman, 2011). According to researchers, in countries where gender inequality and discrimination are high, there is a higher risk of gender based crimes to be committed in such societal structures because the pre-existing gender disparities are exacerbated during conflicts (Banwell, 2014).

Gendered notions of military and violence, often associated with masculinity, and pre-existing gender disparities disproportionately impact women and girls in contexts of conflicts and violence. From a gender perspective, women and girls victimised by violent extremism and conflicts are not only victims of the conflicts and violent extremism but also the pre-existing gendered power disparities that disempower them. Furthermore, gendered notions of 'honour', where honour is largely invested in the female body is common in Pakistan, women are viewed as extensions of their male relations and communities, resulting in gender based violence committed against women and girls in conflict situation to not only target the individual but also the communities at large (Meger, 2010). While women and girls are vulnerable to gender based violence during conflicts and violent extremism, their voices seldom impact security decisions addressing their issues.

Evolution of gendered narratives around women in Pakistan is an interesting point of reference to understand linkages between gender and social cohesion. Women's bodies in Pakistan have been sites of contestation and identities. Therefore, women's bodies have also been sites of violent extremism embodying the dominant narratives of their respective communities. This has been particularly true with regards to women's clothing in Pakistan. While men have been free to wear western clothes, historically, women have been the repositories of culture via their clothing (Rouse 1998). This was further accentuated during Zia's regime from the period of (1977-88) where distinctions and boundaries were established through dress: 'shalwar kamiz' was accepted as the national 'Muslim' dress while 'sari' was denigrated as Indian or Hindu and frowned upon (Rouse, 1995).

From a gender perspective, women's clothing provides important insights into the power dynamics and social fabric inherent in any community, especially those exposed to violence. Women's clothing in Pakistan is an important identifier pointing towards the contesting identities in a community, its contribution towards violent extremism and its impact on women. Women all around the world are representatives of their cultures. Since, Islam is the dominant religion in Pakistan, the religious ideology has amalgamated with the national ideology. Thus, it produced a religio-nationalist discourse, which is propagated in order to preserve the local culture and traditions with the help of women. Thus, this discourse has complemented the patriarchal system while the ideological foundations of the Pakistani state have added to the exclusion of women (Ahmad, 2012).

However, there have also been attempts to incorporate women's rights in the mainstream religious and state discourse in Pakistan. While we will deal with the state's response to violent extremism in more detail in coming sections, it is important to note that efforts have been made to seriously tackle religious fundamentalism. In this regard it is important to mention state-led initiatives such as Paigham-e-Pakistan (Message of Pakistan) and Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan (Daughters of Pakistan). These are *fatwas* (religious rulings) against extremism and anti-state violence passed by major clerics in Pakistan. These rulings prominently emphasise the centrality of women's rights and education, and their political, social, and economic inclusion, as part of the wider religious ruling against violent extremism and anti-state violence[6]. Here too, there needs to be a focus on if and how even pro-women messaging may reinforce patriarchal norms – such as by emphasizing women's role simply in relation to men (as mothers, daughters etc.)

6 See "Unanimous Fatwa – Key Points": http://www.paighamepakistan.com/unanimous-fatwa-key-points/

Dr. Begum Jan (South Waziristan)

Dr. Begum Jan has worked as a health worker in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. She is based in South Waziristan and has been working for the past four decades in the field of public health. In 1995, Dr. Begum Jan started the Tribal Women Welfare Association; a non-profit organization to promote human rights awareness among the most marginalized segments of tribal society particularly focusing on women. She has established many schools, convinced women to make their national identity cards hence increasing the number of registered female voters from those areas.

In recognition of her efforts to empower tribal women, in 2004, Dr. Begum Jan received the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan becoming the first Pakistani woman to receive Tamgha-e-Imtiaz from the tribal areas.

In 2008, Dr. Begum Jan was the first Pakistani woman to receive the U.S International Women of Courage Award from Southeast Asia for her efforts to educate and improve the health, social well-being, and economic empowerment of women in the (erstwhile) Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan. When she was of school going age, Dr. Begum Jan's father supported her education encouraging her to become a doctor. He admitted her in a boy's school as there were no schools for girls in her area. She narrates how she used to sit by the teacher and would be teased by the young boys who found it odd that there was a girl in the class.

Dr. Begum Jan has been a member of the National Commission on the Status of Women to which she has been appointed twice. She was also appointed as a member of the Board of Governors of the Women in Distress and Detention Fund of the Directorate of Social Welfare at the FATA Secretariat. Furthermore, she was appointed as member from FATA to the National Commission for Human Rights between 2015 and 2019.

Dr. Begum Jan has been able to serve her community in the tribal areas through sheer commitment despite attacks meant to derail her efforts. For this she credits her family for their support, especially her father, who was committed to her education her as well as her social work and activism. She narrates that after she successfully implemented a small project for a German partner organization her father very proudly stated: "I am proud that my daughter is working on health, education, human rights and political awareness in the tribal areas".

In order to better elucidate the linkages between social cohesion and women's leadership, it is also important to investigate religious educational centers specifically targeting women; most importantly, how women are attracted towards and exposed to religious narratives which can potentially manifest into violent extremism. The number of *madrassas* (religious schools) in Pakistan has increased has mushroomed since the 1970s, with three million students currently enrolled in around 35,000 madrassas run by boards to different religious sects/orientations[7]. In the last two decades, there has been a concerted effort by the state to register and regularize madrassas, through identifying funding streams, modernizing curricula, and incorporating them into the mainstream/public educational system. Conversely, the number of madrassas for female students has also increased.

7 Figures given from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training: http://mofept.gov.pk/ProjectDetail/YzYxNjUwNDktMjgzMi00YmU3LTkxMzItYWRiZWZjNmU4MDM3

According to a study, it is often believed that middle income families choose the education of madrassahs, because of poverty or lack of educational opportunities and economic opportunities for girls. However, this explanation is not cogent. Most of the middle-income families choose madrassah education as a complement to – rather than to substitute for – secular education. The aim is often to preserve the customary values through women in the family, through encouraging piety and "family-oriented" values (Bano, 2011). Moreover, madrassa education for girls also serves to increased their social status through expanding sphere of Islamic knowledge, community contacts, and even possible opportunities for employment. However, the promotion of customary values hinging on patriarchal codes can also hinder women's agency, choice, decision making and access to and control over resources. Modernity and globalization have also played a fundamental role in creating an intense sense of consternation within the middle-income families with regards to their customary values and 'Muslim' identities. The education of madrassah allows girls to raise their statuses, reproduce their identities within the social patriarchal expectations and gain access to economic opportunities such as performing the role of religious teachers within their communities (Kirmani, 2011). The emphasis on young girls being conscripted as religious teachers comfortably maintains patriarchal privilege through private domain, reproducing private roles of low-income and middle-income families as charity workers or teachers (Rouse, 1998).

Furthermore, Al-Huda[8], which is popular amongst urbanized middle and upper-class women, has utilized the religion-nationalist discourse (above) to create two binary spheres, in which subjects are either submerged within the realm of this discourse or completely outside of it. The processing of 'other-ing' those who do not subscribe to the religion-nationalist discourse forms the basis of potential manifestations of violent extremism. The ideology of the institution "Al-Huda" mostly coincides with that of the conventional clerics as they advocate for a patriarchal system by arguing that gender roles are natural. They put forward the idea that it is a favor from God that women have been granted the responsibility of the household as working outside is a strenuous task (Ahmad, 2012). Interestingly, the mission statement of Al-Huda reveals the same stating that the Center seeks to 'prepare them (women) for their future roles as wives, mothers, sisters and beneficial members of society,' thereby strengthening patriarchal privilege and restricting women to the private domain (Ahmad, 2012).

While we can garner some information about violent extremism and women at the larger level, zooming into specific communities provides interesting perspectives and nuances. Women have been seen to play active roles in the promotion of violence and conflict. In contrast to popular perception of women being passive victims of war, fundamentalist strains (such as the Tehreek-e-Nifaz-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNFZ) in Swat) have actively recruited and mobilized women to the cause of violence (Akhtar, 2010; Zakaria, 2015). In doing so, they have drawn upon discourses of idealized femininity, religious duty, and utopic sublimation to attract female recruitment.

For example, in Swat, a combination of local political and historical factors combined with general patriarchal negotiations led to women supporting Mullah Fazlullah[9] during his rise to prominence. Thus, both Sufi Muhammad and later Fazlullah articulated their extremist politics in the name of "Sharia". This

8 Al-Huda Institute is a Salafi religious educational organization which runs women's religious schools with campuses in Islamabad and Karachi, Pakistan as well as in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. It is run by controversial cleric Farhat Hashmi former member of Jamat-e-Islami a right wing religious political party in Pakistan. Currently Al-Huda has international branches in Canada, UK, India, US, UAE and Sri Lanka, whereas women 'educational sessions' are held in Pakistani cities of Sialkot, Karachi, Faisalabad, Multan, Mansehra, Lahore, Islamabad, Attock, and Peshawar.

9 Mullah Fazlullah was the leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) who was killed in 2018 by a US drone attack. Fazlullah was the son-in-law of Sufi Muhammad, the erstwhile leader of the religious fundamentalist Tehreek-e-Nifaz-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNFZ) movement in Swat, Pakistan. Fazlullah rose to prominence as a fiery radio preacher in the and soon went onto form his own TTP faction, eventually becoming the organisation's leader in 2013 (BBC report: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24847165).

played on historical memories of the era of the State of Swat before its merger into Pakistan, when the legal code was called "Shariat" and was perceived to be more efficient than the Pakistani judicial system. On the other hand, in his early days, Fazlullah strongly advocated for women's rights under Sharia law through his radio program. He took up issues of domestic abuse against women while also promising his women supporters that he would provide their sons with an education and social mobility (Akhtar, 2010; Ali, 2013). Although Fazlullah and his group would eventually turn to extreme patriarchal violence, initially they garnered much support from women who donated generously to his cause.

In some areas of Pakistan, women have little or no participation in the public domain as they are often restricted to their homes, increasing their vulnerability to violence and exploitation (Faraz, 2017). In Swat, this was capitalized on as the message of Mullah Fazlullah directly reached women in their homes through media such as radio. However, the lack of mobility of women, which has also been created by violent extremism for example (TTP) restrictions on women in Swat, has impacted household income and access to facilities, such as health care and education (Faraz, 2017).

Thus, both localized political-historical factors in Swat and generalised patriarchal oppression contributed to women's active involvement in Fazlullah's rise. In other areas of KP or FATA/Newly Merged Districts, local social and political factors might interact differently with women's roles in society. As such, it is important to investigate the particular combination of patriarchal structures and contextual social, political, and historical processes in elucidating the role of women's involvement and acquiescence (or lack thereof) to conflict.

Elsewhere in KP, a study in Haripur highlighted that gender was an identity factor which strongly defined attitudes towards conflict, but social and cultural norms play a considerable role in the actions that both men and women take (Siddiqui, 2017). For example, women in Haripur mentioned that cultural norms prevented them from participating in community activities. Furthermore, other women said that they believed they had a role outside the house, but the absence of knowledge and exposure to their community has meant they are unable to fulfil these roles (Siddiqui, 2017). Females have different social expectations compared to males, which feeds into the patriarchal system that is so prevalent and widely recognized by both genders in the study area (Siddiqui, 2017). The division of public and private spaces between men and women, according to the study, has resulted in men becoming active participants in violent extremism as compared to women.

However, the study also suggested that conflict resolution at the community level is gendered. The perception in Haripur was that women are not involved in the resolution of local community conflicts. Moreover, social legitimacy of mechanisms such as *jirgas*[10] are recognized by all. It is pertinent to note here that jirgas lack any concepts of women participation and replicate the social power structures where a group of men from powerful backgrounds reach a decision by consensus; thereby perpetually excluding women from decision making processes through cultural and ethnic practices. However, conflicts and disputes at the household level are often dealt with by women (Siddiqui, 2017).

Economic resilience is another important factor to curb violent extremism. However, in a research study with regards to Lyari, the findings have been a stark contrast. The labour force participation of women in Lyari is around 20% where most of the women work as low-paid domestic workers in opulent neighborhoods whereas some women also teach in private and public schools. However, most of them are employed

10 A jirga is a traditional assembly of leaders that make decisions by consensus and according to the teachings of Pashtunwali (Pashtun code of life). It predates modern-day written or fixed-laws and is conducted to settle disputes among the Pashtun people but to a lesser extent among other nearby groups that have been influenced by Pashtuns.

> Gendered policy making leads to comprehensive decision - making processes and an inclusive society. Moreover, Women audibility and visibility in policy making processes reflects upon the maturity of a nation.
>
> Dr. Asma Khawaja
> Head of Strategic Studies Department
> National Defence University (NDU)

by low-cost private schools and are paid lesser than government school teachers. According to many women in Lyari, the fact that they work and earn money has exacerbated the hostile situation in their households and increased the frequency of violence. The main reason being that women after working for ten to twelve hours come home tired, as a result of which they are not able to pay attention to household chores. Since women, according to the conventional gender roles are supposed to perform these tasks, it creates tension between husband and wife often leading to domestic abuse. This points towards the need to re-define gender roles for any programmatic interventions for women in conflict as the current gendered pre-dispositions hinder empowerment of women. On the other hand, another reason could be the appropriation of resources, there are some households in Lyari where men force women to handover their income or else they are beaten brutally (Kirmani, 2018). This is indicative of notions of toxic masculinity, where women earning in the household is construed as emasculation, thereby increasing violence against women. Within the current context, therefore, it is pertinent to understand gender relations within communities impacted by violent extremism, as gender disparities are exacerbated in situations of violent extremism.

These varied examples and responses therefore necessitate a Pakistan-wide approach towards research on security, social cohesion, violent extremism, and women's leadership. Such a project can usefully illuminate the ruptural effects of conflict especially with regards to women, the opportunities this has presented for the emergence of women's leadership, and the specific regional, social, and conflict histories which have produced outcomes varied according to class, ethnicity, and region.

SECTION 2

Geographical Distribution of Conflict, Security threats, Sub-national and Regional Variations in Pakistan

As demonstrated in the quantitative survey results (and will be detailed more in subsequent sections), by far the most common violence faced by women is that of everyday variety such as domestic violence and harassment in public space. However, there are also more "conspicuous" and/or "spectacular" forms of violence which have their own gendered origins and effects. This section will provide a brief account of the internal differentiation of the security landscape and its gendered effects. This will then set the stage for the synthesised thematic and conceptual lessons detailed in subsequent sections:

Punjab is the most populous province of Pakistan and has seen the least violence in the country (in terms of overall fatalities), however average death toll per terrorist attack in Punjab remains the highest in the nation.[1] This figure can be attributed to the deadly nature of terrorist attacks in the province which are targeted at rush hours for inflicting maximum damage. Some sectarian organisations have their origins and presence in the province. Inter and intra-sect rivalries, ideological exploitation of sentiments by raising a false plea for jihad, pan-Islamic appeals, religious & international terrorist organisations, propagation of violent narratives over social media, and issues in both mainstream and religious education systems remain vital issues. Some instances of religious riots as well as majority of blasphemy accusations have also occurred in the province.

Sectarian and religious conflicts have been major sources of insecurity for women in Punjab. However, sectarian-religious violence itself overlies conflicts on caste and property. The overwhelmingly low-caste and lower class Christian community in Lahore is extremely vulnerable to allegations of blasphemy while also lacking power and resources. Other conflicts between religious groups impacting women include not allowing processions to pass because the Christian women do not have their heads covered and conflicts regarding Azaan of the Maulvis and Hymns of the Bishops.

In this regard, women are primarily affected as their bodies become major sites of assertion of authority. Moreover, caste and religious conflicts often result in forced conversions and/or curtailment of women's mobility and spaces of sociability (such as objections to calls for prayer, hymns, churches etc.). Conflicts between religious groups manifested their impact on women in various ways. Women have also suffered a great deal where the men in the family have been accused of blasphemy and taken away. According to a discussant, a boy who refused free labour was accused of blasphemy by a man and taken away by the police. His mother's health deteriorated while he continued to remain in jail and eventually his mother died from health complications as her entire family was upended. In some cases of blasphemy, the woman has not only faced the allegations like in the case of Asia Bibi but also the resulting violence. A discussant narrated that in one case a pregnant woman and her family were burnt by a mob due to allegations of blasphemy.

The curtailment of mobility and social spaces also affects employment opportunities for women from middle-class and working-class backgrounds. Conflicts over property are interwoven with caste-religious violence, but affect women of all communities (such as in familial relations). High incidence of domestic violence, sexual harassment, non-consensual pornography or blackmailing through digital means,

1 Regional analysis in line with National Internal Security Policy (2018)

forced marriages were also reported in urbanised areas that have suffered through some forms of violent extremism. Another discussant reported that women partake in subjugating other women, especially in the name of religion, as this discussant was forced to wear hijab when she moved into a new town. Harassment at the workplace is also common against Christian women, who become victims of sexual violence ranging from harassment to rape. Women's self-perception, such as of their own agency and abilities, are therefore crucially affected by these various conflicts and their gendered aspects.

Sindh is ranked as the second most violent region after KP and FATA in terms of casualties on a per capita basis, although in absolute numbers, the province has been conflict-prone since the mid-1980s. Karachi has been the theatre for much of the violence in Sindh province. The largest city, as well as the economic hub of Pakistan, has seen bitter ethnic conflict between various communities. The politicisation and violent conflict along ethnic lines as well as the geographic concentration of these fault lines have given rise to the phenomena of target killings, turf wars, extortion as well as organised crime.

For example, Lyari[2] (where one of the FGDs was held) is a diverse area of Karachi with representation from different ethnic and religious communities including Baloch, Kutchi, Hindu, Christians etc. However, according to discussants, ethnic and linguistic conflicts increased in the late 2000s due to incidents of racism whereby persons belonging from one ethnicity tend to favour their own ethnicity for jobs or other economic opportunities. Moreover, these differences have also drawn upon older class and ethnic conflicts in Karachi, triggered by struggles over land, turf, and extortion (Kirmani). In recent years, sectarian differences have also been a source of conflict between Sunnis and Shias in the area. Such tensions, according to the discussants, have been visible in educational institutions amongst students as well and have existed before the ethnic tensions started in the area. There are still clear divides on the basis of sectarian affiliations where even students partake in sectarian biases and stereotypes from both camps creating disharmony and divisions. One of the discussants explained that initially sectarian conflicts were common in Lyari but with time conflicts between the Kutchi and Baloch ethnic communities in the area have created another layer of violent extremism that the population suffers from, especially women and children.

Women's bodies have also become sites of contestation in Lyari in light of the changing social fabric and identity politics. For example, according to the discussants, women in Lyari used to wear their colourful and boisterous Balochi or Sindhi or cultural dresses with ethnic embroidered 'chaadars'. Hindu women used to wear bangles, adorned their heads with *sandoor* and *bindi* and wore distinctive bright coloured *ghagras* and *cholis* or *sarees* representing their Hindu identities through their clothing. However, according to the discussants there has been a certain 'arabisation' of the area with women wearing dark coloured burqas and covering their faces which was not the practice in Lyari before. With the increased levels of conflicts and violent extremism in the area, there has also been suppression of public displays of ethnic identities by women. One of the reasons women in the area now wear burqas is not only to save themselves from harassment and but also to not be identified as 'Kutchi' or 'Baloch' when in public. Further, one of the discussants wearing burqa explained that the pressure from families and their respective communities is such that in order to ensure their own mobility they wear a burqa.

Hindu and Christian women in Lyari now wear shalwar kameez and even cover their heads with chaadars or scarves like Muslim women when they go out. One Hindu discussant explained how she does not wear her

2 For a more detailed background on Lyari and associated gang wars between various ethnicities please refer to Nadeem F. Paracha's article available at: https://www.dawn.com/news/706128/the-good-the-bad-the-lyari

bindi or *sandoor* anymore as she feels uncomfortable and judged when in Lyari for adorning her religious symbols. Furthermore, a right-wing political party (Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan) won a provincial assembly seat from Lyari in the 2018 General Elections. While this was also affected by local level politics, it is also indicative of the changing cultural fabric of the area from a beacon of social cohesion and diversity to increasing religious conservatism (Zia Rehman the News report).

Sectarian and ethnic conflict has led to a great premium on displays of violent masculinity. In fact, as scholars such as Nichola Khan and Oskar Verkaaik have shown, the proliferation and use of advanced ammunition has crucially intersected with displays of masculine and inter-generational assertion in urban Sindh's ethnic conflicts. Conditions of violence have also led to economic insecurity, which then makes some women willing to participate in further conflict through male relatives who become beneficiaries of the political economy of conflict. The biggest contribution by women to violent extremism, according to the discussants, is their contribution towards enforcing gender roles that are detrimental to women and feed toxic masculinity. Within the context of gang wars in Lyari, the discussants felt that the role of women as mothers, especially in conditions of economic insecurity, feeds into toxic masculinity of men which can perpetuate violent conflict. Normative claims linking strength, resources, violence and power to men feed into in a culture of toxic masculinity which was heightened during the conflicts and gang wars.

Increasing religiosity and its effects on women is also a theme which emerged in the FGD with rural women from areas surrounding Malir (Karachi) such as Aansoo Goth, Memon Goth, and Jam Goth. A significant population of Hindus live in these areas, who feel ostracised by the larger Muslim majority. Many Hindus feel socially isolated and extreme religiosity is hardening differences between the communities such as through restriction on social interaction. According to one of the discussants, the practices of inter-faith harmony are eroding which can lead to violence, especially towards women and girls.

Girls dropping out from school and parents not supporting girls' education was also a common feature in the rural FGD. According to the discussants, girls and women are denied opportunities to learn and develop themselves, their personalities and careers. Rather, according to one discussant, a Degree College in Memon Goth stopped accepting girls into the college because the interaction and inter-mingling of the two sexes on college campus was inappropriate according to the College's administration. Furthermore, non-acceptance of girls in the college has now resulted in higher numbers of early forced marriages as girls are not allowed to travel outside community area for education and they have no future prospects other than marriage.

The FGD with women from rural areas also saw empowerment (or lack thereof) as a key reason for women contributing towards violent extremism. The discussants stated that women are generally disempowered through their lives with little or no control over their life decisions, their bodies and their choices etc. The experience of power and control over other people is a major factor with regard to women's role in violence extremism. Moreover, in situations where women come into power, after being disempowered and victimised for so long, they perpetuate the cycle of violence against other women.

In different parts of Sindh, cases of forced conversions from Hindu to Muslim also affect women disproportionately. The phenomenon of Hindu to Muslim conversions is a complex issue: ranging from lower class/caste Hindu women being attracted by the "prestige" associated with Muslim clerics, to being victims of abductions and sexual harassment which are then covered up as "voluntary" conversions to Islam (Jurgen Schaflechner, 2017). Again, these issues of forced conversion, conflicts of ethnicity etc. are overlain by issues of caste, property, and turf. As such, patriarchal structures interact in complex ways with

existing gender, class, and caste hierarchies to enforce religious oppression of women in form of forced conversions. For women this has resulted in increased insecurity as conflict hardens boundaries between different communities, with latter playing out over women's bodies.

Despite these hurdles, there are prominent examples of women's leadership and autonomy which have emerged out of conflict in both urban and rural areas of Sindh. For example, there are several community-led initiatives in Lyari focussed on social uplift and women's empowerment. Participants gave several examples with regards to these: there is Lyari Tech which provides education and livelihood trainings to women; Girls' Café which is a space for young women to gather and discuss ideas; and an an initiative through which women go out in a group for cycling one day in a week (Kirmani, DAWN). So initiatives are being taken by women to create spaces for young women in the area and build their capacity in areas of education and livelihoods. There are many young women from Lyari who have carved out a niche for themselves in the world of sports too. Other prominent examples include Mahira Miyanji who is a civil society leader and has founded her own organisation to work for women and address women's issues in Lyari, while Seema Maheswari is a prominent social activist working for the rights of women from religious minorities.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and FATA have been affected by the war in neighbouring Afghanistan and its spill over effect. Between 2005 and 2012, the region recorded approximately 11,862 casualties involving civilians, security forces, and militants, primarily as a result of terrorist-related activity[3]. FATA and adjoining regions, in particular, have seen religiously motivated attacks with a number of militia forces vying for control over territory. The militants briefly also controlled settled districts of Swat and Buner, merely 100 miles away from the capital Islamabad. Most of the incidents of terrorism have also been tracked to this region. Various successful military operations have been able to clear the area and re- establish the writ of the state. However, the intensified military operations in FATA since 2014 have resulted in problems such as enforced disappearances and a peak of over a million residents displaced (2014 Sept 1 Al Jazeera). Even by the end of 2019, the International Displacement Monitoring Center tabulated almost 106,000 internally displaced persons.

War and terrorism have had deleterious effects on Pashtun society and especially on women. Families of victims of terrorism suffer greatly. Moreover, the prevailing patriarchal customs make it very difficult for women to move out of the sphere of the household. Prevalence of fundamentalist interpretations of religion combined with patriarchal cultural "codes" have played out in the form of greater policing of women's bodies. Another interesting finding for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been shift in power structures in Pashtun society, while initially power belonged to Maliks or Masharan (elders) who enforced traditional Pashtun codes, power eventually gravitated towards the Mullahs due to regional and international politics. The combination of *rewaj* (tradition or "code of honour") and religious interpretations has detrimentally impacted women rights and women's agency in the province while also perpetuating extremist narratives condoning violence against women.

For example, the discussants explained that they fear dishonour (or 'tor' in Pashto) the most. The discussions further unpacked this fear held by women: as Pashtun societies are premised on codes of 'honour' and 'ghairat' women fear bringing shame to their families as it is something unacceptable in Pashtun families who are respectable. In certain cases, 'tor' or dishonour also manifests into honour killing. The discussants revealed that gender disparities within households are such that girls and women are restricted in every aspect, whereas even when parents are aware that their sons are doing drugs or bringing weapons home, they do not get reprimanded. There have also been

3 Figures attained from National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA): Incidences of terrorism

increased cases of murders and suicides according to the discussants, owing to the extreme atmosphere of uncertainty and extremism.

The trust deficit within families also leads to high cases of domestic violence. Interestingly, one of the women discussants who has separated from her husband now has the same fears for her daughter who goes to university. The discussions revealed that certain social norms are so imbedded in people's realities that it is difficult to leave such fears and practices behind. In order to elucidate their point, the discussants explained that men's perception of women is rooted in seeing women as less than men: less intelligent than men, less stronger than men, less capable than men etc. Therefore, women's existence, identity and personality in society is not even validated or acknowledged by men; they mostly live lives of invisibility. The discussions also revealed that the fear of dishonour and shame is so high in Peshawar that there have been incidents where girls have committed suicide because of this fear. The fear ingrained in the women discussants was not just the fear or shame or dishonour but also fear of having daughters rather than sons. One of the discussants quoted having a daughter as 'double sadness'. Moreover, this kind of disenfranchisement of women has also resulted, such as in the Mullah Fazlullah case in Swat, some women in being attracted to violent organisations. These conflicts, and their attraction for women, thus play upon existing sociological, political, and ideological fault lines especially around lines of gender.

FGD discussants also pointed to cases of sexual violence against women as well as young boys. Being more easily accessible in the public sphere, young boys are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. In the current set up of Peshawar, men are not only violating women and girls now, they are also violating boys which is a matter of grave concern at the moment. Like other provinces of Pakistan, in KP too, issues of property and caste also play a role in fuelling conflict, especially that which affects women negatively.

Balochistan has traditionally seen violent ethnic conflict threatening the integrity of the State. It is Pakistan's largest province in terms of its geographic size, comprising about 42 percent of the national territory. Concerning extremism and violence, it is ranked fourth among other provinces. In recent years, sectarian conflict has also affected the province with minority communities, especially the Hazaras, being targeted in Quetta, the provincial capital.

Balochistan has increasingly been gripped by state-ethnic nationalist and (particularly) anti-Shia sectarian violence. With state and nationalist violence, women have often had a chance to assert leadership especially in context of activism for rights and for recovery of missing persons. Shia killings in Quetta have had particularly severe effects on the Hazara[4] community. During discussions, it was highlighted how human dignity is mutilated during a terrorist attack and the sight of dead bodies after a bomb blast are gruesome and harrowing, especially where the victims are women. The overall situation after a terrorist bomb blast and the resulting chaos allows opportunities for miscreants to disrespect dead bodies, especially of women, and steal any remaining possessions making identification of bodies further problematic. Women's needs are completely ignored in such security situations and the patriarchal norms further burden women to not only save their lives but also safeguard their bodies and modesty amidst the violence and chaos. Media insensitivity in cases of violent extremism and photographing victims in undignified states also further adds to the trauma of families.

Increased poverty and lack of economic opportunities was the main point of discussion during FGDs by women discussants who had lost family members to violent extremism. Considering the predominantly patriarchal social structure, women discussed how they

4 For a detailed study on the history of Hazara Community and plight in Quetta, Balochistan please refer to this report developed by Justice (R) Ali Nawaz Chowhan at National Commission For Human Rights available at: https://nchr.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/HAZARA-REPORT.pdf

do not have the skills for *mazdoori* (hard labour) which was mostly undertaken by the men in their families. In the context of gendered realities of the province, the women who have lost family's men have no source of income or opportunities to earn a livelihood. The discussant women lacked basic education and spoke only Brahvi, there had been no investment in their education or livelihood skills as earning an income is considered to be the responsibility of men in their communities. The discussants explained that they suffer from extreme forms of poverty after losing men of their families to violent extremism and lack options to secure a decent livelihood for their families. The women were also older in age with multiple health issues and often resorted to begging in order to buy food for their families. There is a heavy reliance on 'sadqa' or charity or menial work to have one meal a day for their families.

Women here have been left to fend for families, with little state support. Furthermore, the Balochistan Government enacted the Balochistan Civilian Victims of Terrorism (Relief and Rehabilitation) Act 2014 to provide for institutionalised response to the hardships faced by civilian victims of terrorism and their families. However, most of the discussant women were unaware of this Act and could not claim the relief provided for them under the law. Some discussants explained that they have been exploited by middle men who promised to facilitate them in acquiring relief fund from the government but never gave these funds to the women after taking their information. Another discussant explained that when the Government announced relief package after her father died in a terrorist attack, this resulted in further harassment of her and her family members by relatives and acquaintances who kept inquiring about the money they were going to receive from the government. Despite legislative guarantees, the discussion revealed that women discussants lacked access to relief packages due to lack of NICs and practices of exploitation by middle-men and relatives.

The discussants explained how multiple layers of violence witnessed by women have scarred their world view and they can only hope to recover from the trauma one day. Economic insecurity and exploitation (of various kinds, including sexual) have resulted in mental health issues being rampant among Hazara women. For example, one of the discussants, whose father died in a 2016 terrorist attack on lawyers in Quetta[5], explained that even though she belongs to a middle-class family, losing her father in such a way has resulted in her suffering from mental health issues including grief, anxiety and manic depression. Furthermore, the discussant group conceded that in light of extreme poverty, these mental health issues are exacerbated resulting in the need for medical attention which most of the discussant women could not even afford. In Hazara community, mental health issues were also rampant but compared with the Baloch women discussants of rural areas, physical health issues are less. Furthermore, at the time of FGD, pilgrims were returning from Iran to Hazara Town which has also put the community at a very high risk for Coronavirus and its spread.

The atmosphere of violence and poverty has also resulted in increased incidence of child marriages. Participants pointed out that early and forced marriages of Hazara girls have become common in order to safeguard girls from sexual violence in the current context of violent extremism in Hazara Town. Interestingly, when probed the discussants did not consider early or child marriages as 'forced' marriages rather they stated that it is important to get girls married off early in order to 'secure' their future and save them from the violence being perpetrated against the community. However, due to the presence of progressive political parties among the community, several Hazara women have also come forward as prominent voices and leaders. These have taken up

5 On 8th August 2016, a suicide bomber targeted the emergency services ward at Quetta's Civil Hospital Monday, killing at least 74 (mostly lawyers) and leaving scores injured. Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the shooting and the bombing, details of the event available here: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/09/world/asia/quetta-pakistan-blast-hospital.html

prominent civil society and political roles to raise voice for the plight of the Hazara and for other communities of Balochistan.

In terms of other ethnic communities in Balochistan, participants narrated that there has been a reduction in tribal conflict over time. Within these dynamics, gender-specific differences were also pointed between the Baloch code of life (Mayar) and Pashtun code of life (Pashtunwali). The Baloch ethnic code is premised on individual responsibility as opposed to collective responsibility which is more a feature of Pashtunwali than Baloch way of life. The tribal Baloch conflicts like that of Raisanis and Rinds are acts of violence between men where women are not directly targeted. Secondly, Baloch women can serve as effective mediators in tribal conflicts due to the respect and honour associated with women in Baloch communities. The discussants revealed that in case of a conflict if a woman of an opposing Baloch tribe goes to the home of the other Baloch tribe, even murders of family members can be forgiven as the act of the women coming to the house of the Baloch tribe is seen with great reverence.

However, in Pashtun communities' women and girls bear the brunt of tribal conflicts due to 'rewaj' (established practices) like 'swara' (giving women or girls in compensation). While swara has been part of Pashtun rewaj to mediate conflicts, the discussants stressed that the practice of swara amongst Pashtun communities in Balochistan is decreasing due to increasing awareness and change in mind-set. Furthermore, it was reiterated that no such concept as 'swara' exists in Baloch culture.

Another point of discussion was the ethnic conflict against Punjabis in Balochistan. Here economic and political factors were at play, especially in light of the long-standing nationalist conflict in the province and the privileged position of some Punjabis in Balochistan in the economy and state bureaucracy. Punjabis were also perceived to be more allied to an oppressive Pakistani state, and instrumentalised by the state in its war against Baloch nationalists. Many Punjabis were terrorised out of the province in order to purchase their properties at lower market prices and make long term investments. One of the discussants revealed that properties worth crores were sold for a mere lakhs during the years of conflict which forced many Punjabi families to emigrate. In this regard, men and women have suffered in equal parts as Punjabi women, especially those in leadership positions in government, were also assassinated by Baloch nationalist groups[6] fighting the Pakistani state for independence.

Gilgit-Baltistan has remained largely peaceful, however some violence along sectarian lines has been witnessed. Azad Jammu and Kashmir have seen violence mostly due to cross-border firing on the Line of Control; however, the region has otherwise remained relatively peaceful. Our Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) however were focussed on the other major provinces/ regions of Pakistan. Exploration of gendered drivers and effect of conflict in GB remains a major area for future research.

The above-mentioned security challenges represent symptoms of several social, economic and political conflicts that, if not addressed, will continue to fuel instability and violence. It is therefore essential to go beyond traditional security threat assessment and understand the structural drivers of insecurity in society so that tailored policy interventions can be formulated to address the root causes of extremism, violence and terrorism in the country. With regards to the ambit of this research report, it is the specifically gendered aspects of conflict and insecurity that we turn to in the following sections.

6 A historical analysis of Baloch separatist movements can be accessed in the research study by (Hoshang Noraiee 2020) available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1879366520901920

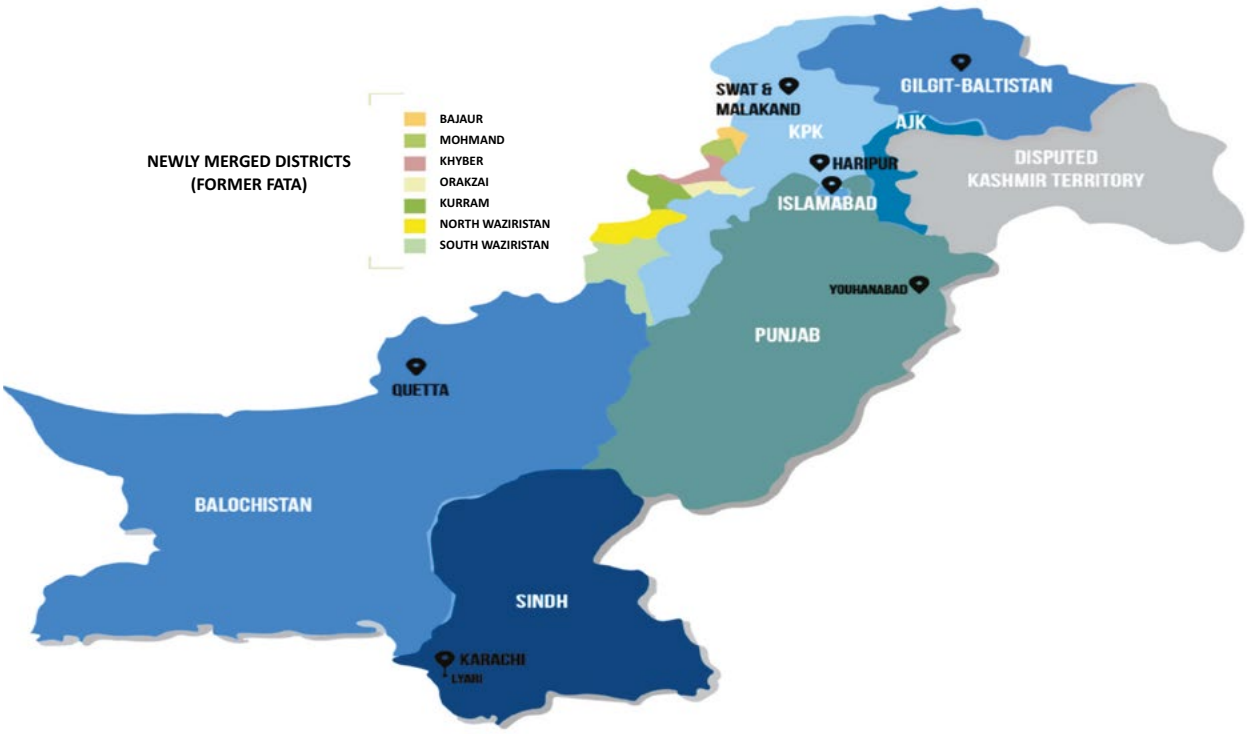


Figure 1: Political Map of Pakistan

Pakistan's Policy Response to Terrorism and Violent Extremism:

Extremism and terrorism, in their multiple manifestations, pose a severe threat to the internal security of Pakistan. Over the years, the Government of Pakistan has adopted hard and soft measures to deal with the hazard of terrorism and extremism. The country's first- ever National Internal Security Policy[7] was announced in 2014, followed by the adoption and implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP)[8] in December 2014, constituting twenty high priority areas derived from NISP 2014. These measures combined with military operations (Operation Zarb-e-Azb, Radd-ul-Fasaad, Swat Operation Rah-e-Rast) against terrorism led to a remarkable improvement in internal security, indicated by a marked decline in incidents of terrorism throughout the country.

To consolidate the efforts of various ministries and law enforcement agencies, the National Internal Security Policy[9] (NISP 2018) was formulated providing a comprehensive framework for dealing with internal security challenges. It was built on the foundations laid down by NISP 2014, incorporates the lessons learnt during the implementation of NAP. For the first time, the policy was based on an expanded notion of security that defined "peace not simply as the absence of violence, but as the presence of conditions necessary for enhancing social cohesion and resilience".

Moreover, it adopted a 'whole of the nation' approach and proposes recommendations to reshape both the 'state' and 'society' for achieving sustainable peace.

7 Available at: https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/National-Internal-Security-Policy-2014.pdf

8 https://nacta.gov.pk/nap-2014/ In the aftermath of the Army Public School attack on 16th of December 2014, a national consensus was evolved to counter the terrorist threat in the country through a concerted national effort. The National Internal Security Policy 2014 (NISP) focused on broad policy guidelines and long-term institutional reforms. Consequently, a National Action Plan (NAP) deriving from NISP 2014, focusing on twenty priority areas for countering terrorism and extremism was chalked out by NACTA/ Ministry of Interior in consultation with the stakeholders and approved on 24th of December, 2014 by the Parliament.

9 Available at: https://www.interior.gov.pk/index.php/downloads/category/32-policies

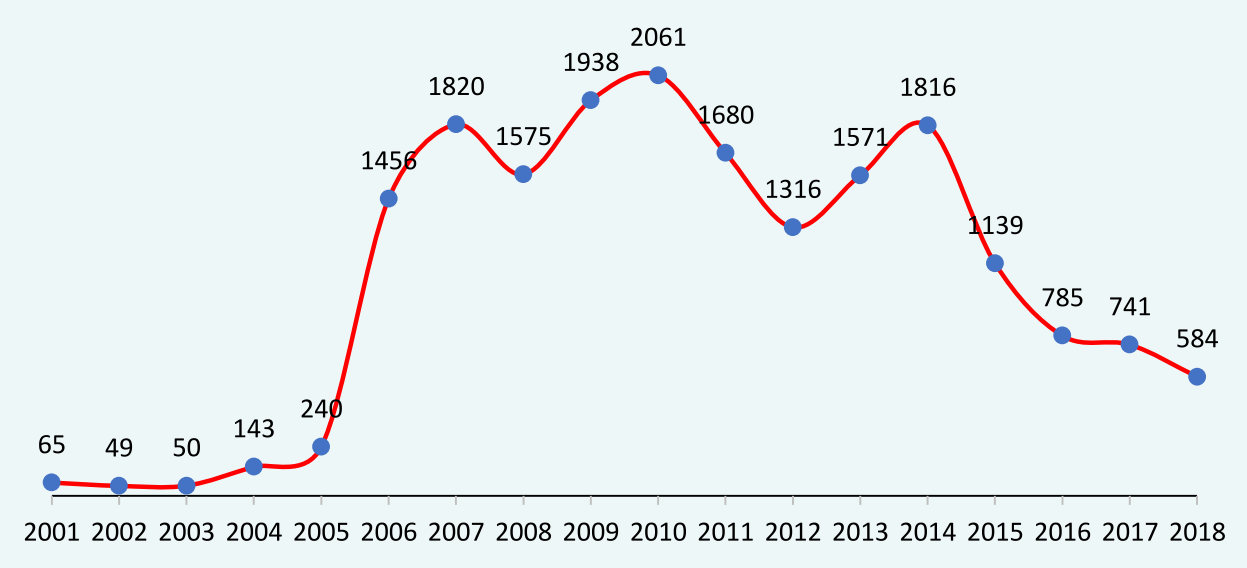


Figure 1: Decrease in the incidences of terrorism in Pakistan (Source: NACTA)

These recommendations fall into three key domains mainly Administrative, Ideational and Socio-economic. The NISP 2018 established a multi-pronged strategy termed as the "6Rs Strategy" to meet the goals and objectives set forth. These included to: Reorient, Reimagine, Reconcile, Redistribute, Recognize, and the adoption of a Regional Approach.

It was encouraging to observe that NISP 2018 was the first document which made an attempt to address the gender dimension of security and realised challenges posed by unequal socio-economic and political development of the country. Moreover, it offered a reoriented and expanded notion of security with a greater focus on the welfare function of the State, supporting the economically marginalised segments of society.

NISP 2018 postulates that "State must also create an enabling environment for the economic and political empowerment of young men and women to make them resilient against extremist narratives and help them become active citizens". Relatedly, NISP 2018 provided gender focused policy directives focusing on "Enacting laws to ensure gender equality and creating a safe work environment for women to increase female participation in the labour force". Focus was placed on making public spaces women friendly to increase their participation in public life. Moreover, strict enforcement of Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006, Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act, 2016, Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences Relating to Rape) Act 2016 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2011 on Acid and Burn Crime was stressed and further strengthened by including modern scientific investigative methods such as DNA sampling to curb gender-based violence. Lastly, economic value of domestic work by women who sacrifice their careers to take up the responsibility of managing households and child rearing was acknowledged and the policy pledged to amend family laws take women's "in-kind" financial support to the family into consideration.

SECTION 3

Covid-19 and Gender

The corona virus (Covid-19) has taken the world by storm. Epidemiologists and critical political ecologists had been warning policy-makers for years that humanity was primed to face a flu-like epidemic of devastating scope and consequences (Rob Wallace). However, the hollowing out of state and welfare capacity under the auspices of neoliberalism and structural adjustment the world over, combined with the rise of right-wing populist regimes in major countries, has resulted in governments woefully unprepared – and often even indifferent – to the danger posed by the virus. These conditions have combined to create the perfect storm: medical and welfare capacities even in developed countries are struggling to cope with the rapid rise in illness, while the world economy is now facing a depression akin to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The gendered effects of the virus are beginning to emerge and will have definite effects on social cohesion and resilience to violent narratives in communities. These are intimately related to the wider social relations of production and reproduction in which gender has been produced in specific ways. With scaling down of the welfare state the world over since the 1970s, there has been a prominent towards feminisation of labour especially in low-paid, precarious, and social reproduction work (such as nursing, care homes, home-based detail work etc.). In turn, underinvestment in public services has combined with the corona virus to expose gendered underbelly of care work (Bhattacharya Spectre).

In terms of its direct effects, and where disaggregated data on infections and fatalities is available, the corona virus seems to affect men at a higher percentage compared to women (Washington Post). This is thought to be a variety of social, environmental, and biological factors – including greater propensity for outdoor activity, smoking, under-reporting, and genetic factors among men. However, the social effects of the corona virus are gendered in other ways too. Most prominently this is seen in the way women workers face the brunt of the epidemic. Women make up 70% of the labour force in the health sector, with nurses being absolute frontline workers in contact with corona patients (Farzana Bari). And in doctors' struggles for personal protective equipment (PPEs) in Pakistan and the world over, women workers have been at the forefront (Spectre; Jamhoor).

However, societal narratives with regards to the spread of the virus in Pakistan have latched onto existing fault lines of social conflict and extremist narratives. Thus, in the initial days of the spread of the virus, the infection of pilgrims resulting from Iran caused an upsurge of speculation and discrimination against Shia Muslims. This was especially the case in informal and even official notifications discriminating against the already-marginalized Hazara community of Balochistan (Changezi DAWN). The overlaying of social-medical emergencies with sectarian fault lines will exacerbate marginalization of women within the community, who have been suffering deep post-conflict trauma and exclusion. Relatedly, reports have also emerged of selected charities discriminating against religious minorities (including Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadis) in their ration-distribution drives. Such exclusions are felt more acutely by women of these communities, facing as they do the burdens of social reproduction and normative values of community "honour".

With Pakistan set to experience negative economic in 2020 (World Bank), cost-cutting, lay-offs and unemployment is offloaded onto the weakest and segments of the workforce i.e. the informal and precarious sections of the workforce where women are disproportionately represented. Moreover, Pakistan's economic structure is critically dependent

on commodity and low-value products' export supply chains. With the worldwide economic depression, demand will drastically reduce with the weaker segments of the workforce downstream (such as women) being disproportionately affected.

Additionally, the dire state of the public healthcare system in Pakistan (and, indeed, many countries all over the world), will also affect women disproportionately. As all services are redirected towards corona crisis, women will suffer adversely due to reduced access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. Thus, for example during the Ebola pandemic in 2015, the UN estimated that 120,000 preventable maternal deaths would be caused due to the redirection of medical services (Bari). Plus, the government's decision to distribute corona-induced bonus Ehsaas/Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) payments among the poor has also seen increased risk of virus among women. This is due to the fact that women are often designated household member for receiving BISP assistance and the public arrangements plus long queues for the distribution increases the risk of women contracting the virus.

In conditions of material deprivation and financial uncertainty can have a deleterious effect on social cohesion and resilience to violent narratives. Emergencies (such as disasters and displacements) are often used by civil arms of fundamentalist groups to increase their influence and narrative among communities. This is especially so since the monumental uncertainty of the situation can easily be harnessed to narratives of millenarianism (such as "God has done this to punish the West").

In a prominent case, a police female officer was even attacked[1] by enraged worshippers in a working-class/ lower middle-class area of Karachi for attempting to enforce the moratorium on congregations decreed by the government. At one level, the incident reveals the lack of trust between state and civil society, and

"The terrorist's narratives against women empowerment and education have no basis in Islam or the constitution of Pakistan and their rights must be upheld by the state and the society. In Pakistan's quest for stability and security, women remain a strong pillar of support and need to be recognized and celebrated as such. The success against terrorism was not possible without the support of Pakistani women who worked as mothers, teachers, mentors, civil society workers and most importantly those working in the fields of internal security and law enforcement."

Humaira Mufti
National Security and Terrorism Expert

1 More details on the incident can be accessed at : https://www.dawn.com/news/1548201

the space ceded historically to fundamentalist groups, which has societal space open for conspiratorial, millenarian, and extremist narratives. On the other hand, it also demonstrates the vulnerabilities and insecurities faced even by state officers who are female. As we will see later, such incidents are part of the reason for women's lack of confidence to take up operational role in security institutions.

More importantly, the loss of livelihood and economic uncertainty can increase vulnerability of women to social and sexual violence. In this regard, the UN Refugee Agency has warned that displaced women and girls are facing a heightened risk of gender-based violence during the corona crisis, with the real danger that many may be forced into "survival sex" or child marriages (UNHCR). As we will describe later, sexual exploitation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations is a prevalent but highly under-reported issue in communities such as the Hazara. Increased uncertainties and vulnerability, combined with already precarious situations and discriminating, may serve to increase this kind of overt sexual oppression of women from marginalised communities.

Additionally, social isolation and economic depression has been having deleterious effects on women in the prime space of social reproduction i.e. the household. Enforcement of normative gender roles already sees women bear a disproportionate burden in the carrying out of domestic labour. The extraordinary circumstances of physical confinement to the environs of the home have seen a sharp rise in domestic violence globally. In Pakistan too, advocacy groups are reporting a sharp rise in reported incidents of domestic abuse, which are estimated to be much lower than total actual cases. In fact, ReliveNow (an online counselling and therapy platform) reports that "that our clients are leaving their online sessions unfinished", presumably due to the fear and stigma of being discovered "exposing" their problems to an "outsider" (Soharwardi the News). While the Ministry of Human Rights has set up a helpline[2] phone and WhatsApp number for vulnerable women and children, these are often of limited efficacy due to issues of access, social expectations, and stigma associated with reporting/hiding domestic abuse incidents. Plus, the poor conditions of living in most urban areas in Pakistan also means not only the risk of easier virus transmission, but a greater likelihood of social and domestic disputes spilling over into gendered violence (Dawn corona urban report). The sexualised and social vulnerabilities of women and likelihood of decreased social cohesion, especially in (post-)conflict communities, have already been pointed to above and will be discussed in more detail below.

As such, the corona epidemic – while designating a world-wide social and economic crisis/depression – will also have specific gendered effects with regards to social cohesion and susceptibility to violent narratives. These are already being manifested in the form of struggles worldwide and in Pakistan by medical and care workers for PPE and other facilities. Economic depression and mass lay-offs will affect weaker segments of the workforce where women are disproportionally represented. The deleterious spatial conditions of living and dire financial situations also lead to increased likelihood of domestic violence, eroding social cohesion, and rise in vulnerability to violent narratives. Moreover, the gutted welfare state and redirection of public healthcare systems will affect basic services that are availed by women in everyday life.

2 More details on the initiative of Ministry of Human Rights in Pakistan, can be accessed at: https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/645699-calling-from-home

SECTION 4

Research Targeted Population- Profile of Participants (Survey)

The study pursued three avenues for gathering data in order to answer the research questions identified above: Quantitative Surveys, Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informant Interviews. The major research questions which were researched and explored are as follows:

1. What are the resources (assets, capital, land, technology etc.) and capacities (skills, education, social prestige etc.) which are determinant of hierarchy and social structure in a particular community? (and where women lie in this)

2. How have different types and degrees of intense conflicts created ruptures in social structures (such as sectarian conflict in Quetta and civil war/fundamentalist violence in Pashtun areas)?

3. How has the distribution of resources and capacities (identified in Q1) changed over the duration of the conflict? Have the criteria for leadership and hierarchy – the resources and capacities required therein – changed over this duration?

4. How have women been affected by these conflicts? Have conflicts created openings for assertion of women's leadership or have they further entrenched patriarchal marginalization of women?

5. What histories, discourses, resources, and capacities (as identified in Q1 and Q3) have been mobilized in these varied responses by women? For example, have the discourses been mobilized that of essentialist women's "positions"/ "capacities", or those of universalist-normative discourses of women's equality?

"Extremist groups tend to exploit vulnerable, marginalized segments of the society, offering them moral engagement. To plug this gap, we must strive for an inclusive society. Women are the first teachers of any child; UN Women could become a catalyst for attainment of their rightful place in the society."

Ihsan Ghani
Former Head of NACTA and Intelligence Bureau

6. If there has been an assertion on the side of conflict or peace, what groups of women have been most prominent? That is, women from which age groups, class(es), professions/ educational backgrounds, and/or ethnicity have been most prominent? And why?

7. Leading on from Q5 and Q6 above, how have women's responses to conflict been different to those of men (if at all)?

8. What do the mobilization of particular discourses and forms of assertion tell us about deploying gendered lens towards the study of conflict and peace? Do gender-

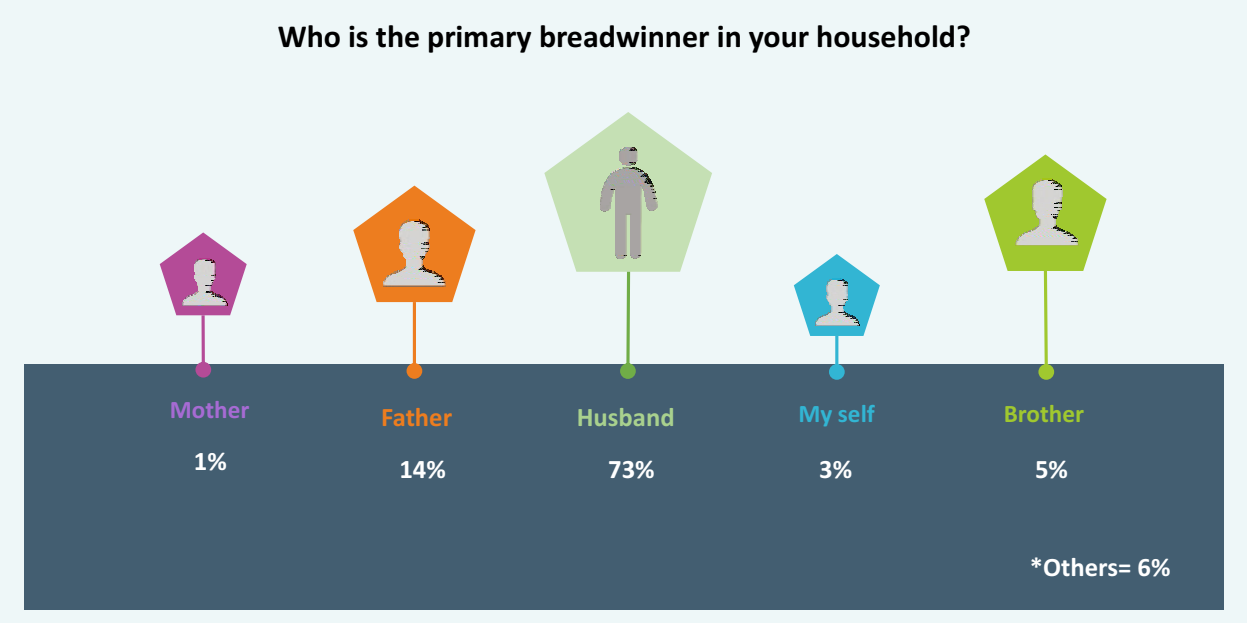
focused initiatives add substantially to peace-making and social cohesion?

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out in all provinces of Pakistan. In each province, focus groups were held with women from urban and rural backgrounds. The questions addressed during the FGDs ranged from issues of women's everyday experiences in the community, any possible conflict or violence which the FGD participants and/or members may have encountered, the effect of conflict on local community and leadership structures, and women's leadership (or lack thereof) in the community during and after conflict.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with stakeholders holding different positions in both civil and political society: these ranged from bureaucrats and civil service persons in the security bureaucracy, active politicians, grassroots community activists associated with civil society organisations, and academics. A total of thirty interviews were held across the different regions of Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta and Karachi. The questions asked during the KII ranged from elucidating causes of conflict in the regions where participants' work was focused, the specific impacts of conflict on women, women's role in promoting and/or ameliorating conflict, women's – potential and actual – role in understanding mitigating conflict especially in policy-making roles, and possible ways of promoting gender equity in measures of conflict amelioration.

A comprehensive quantitative survey was held over all four provinces with close to seven hundred and fifty women (n = 746). The survey assessed a wide range of metrics, but with a focus on understanding women's place in local community structures, their exposure to conflict, their participation in conflict and/or post-conflict measures in the community, and their general autonomy when it comes to exercising personal agency. Women were also asked their opinion on questions related to measuring their desire for civic and economic participation, and their outlook on social and political issues in the community and the country.

The results elicited from the FGDs and KIIs will be discussed in much greater detail in the coming sections. In the following paragraphs, we will highlight key points elicited from the quantitative survey. This will shed light on some general social and demographic details of the participants of the research. As such, it will give us an overall insight



Housewife	89%
Maid	2%
Stitch clothes	2%
Business-Small business	2%
Professional-School Teacher	1%
Student	1%
Unskilled worker/Labor work	1%
Others	1%
No Response	1%

What is your occupation?

on the research participants, which will be detailed in subsequent sections focusing on specific themes with regards to women, conflict/social cohesion, and leadership, along with regional variations in the latter.

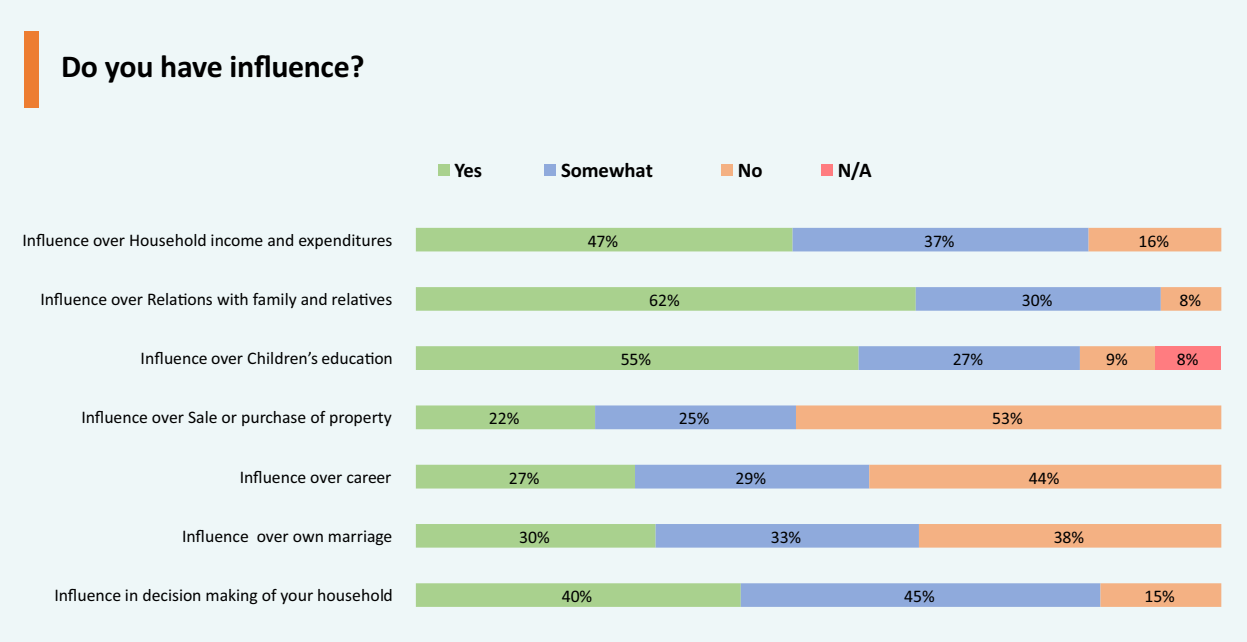
A total of 746 women were surveyed during the course of the research. These corresponded roughly to the population proportion of each of Pakistan's provinces, including 40% participants from Punjab and 35% from Sindh. The participants ranged from young adults to older women, with an average age of 34.

Overall, the participants came from overwhelmingly working-class and lower-middle class backgrounds. This is reflected in the average income of the participants which was Rs. 18,000 per month (close to the minimum wage in Pakistan). More than one-third (34%) reported having no formal education, while one-fifth (20%) had only completed primary education.

Only 3% of the participants were the main breadwinners in their households, even while 79% contributed to the household income in some way. An overwhelming majority of the participants (89%) were engaged in domestic/unpaid labour as housewives, while those doing paid labour were mostly in specific sectors, such as home-based work, stitching, and domestic work in other households

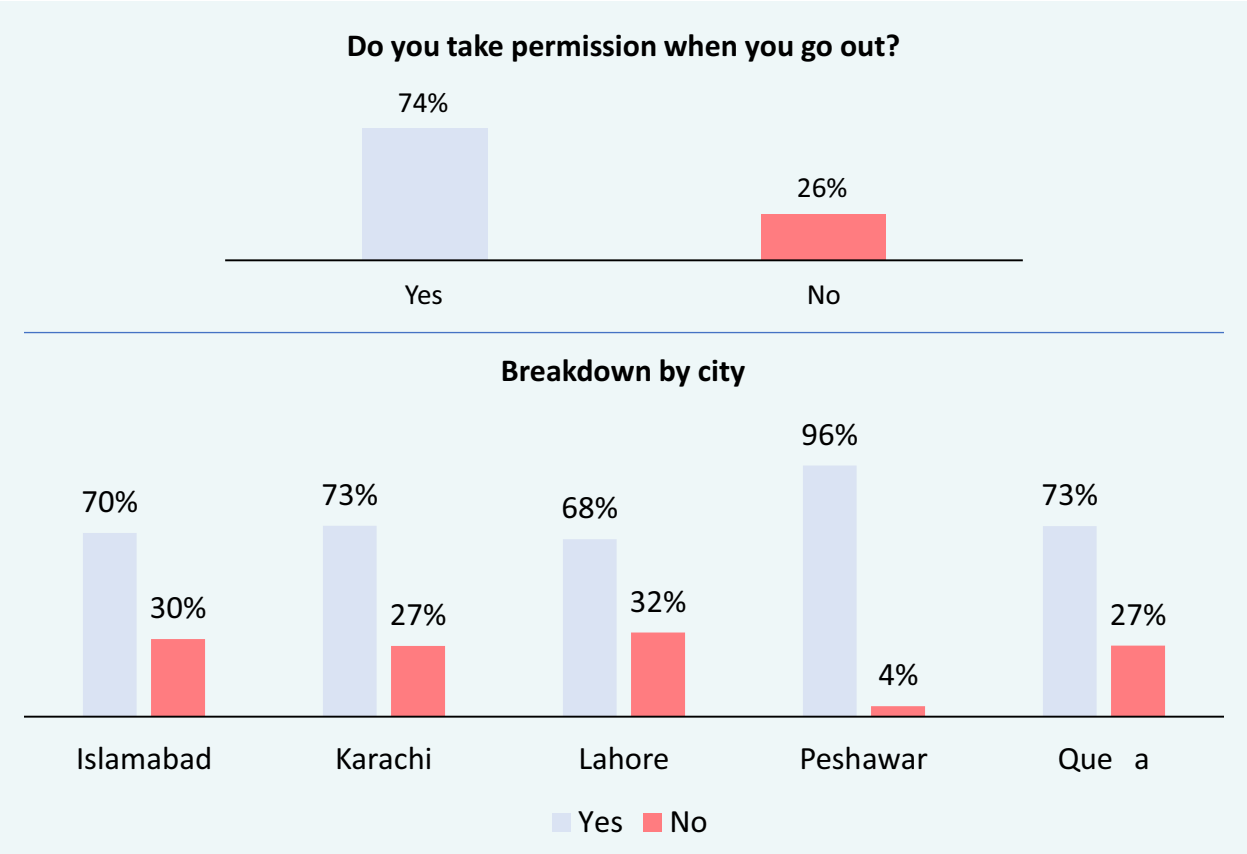
The lack of economic autonomy was closely mirrored by a deficit of personal agency in other spheres of social life. Thus, for example, only 40% of women reported having influence in decision-making with their households, while only 27-30% women reported having influence over both their career and marriage choices. Even though, 79% of the respondent stated that they contribute towards household income in some form, 47% responded that they had influence over household income and expenditures while 37% stated that they had somewhat influence over household income and expenditures. Therefore, women's economic empowerment supports women's agency and participation or influence over decision making at household level which can prove beneficial to closing gender gaps and mitigating impact of conflicts/breakdown in social cohesion on women and girls.

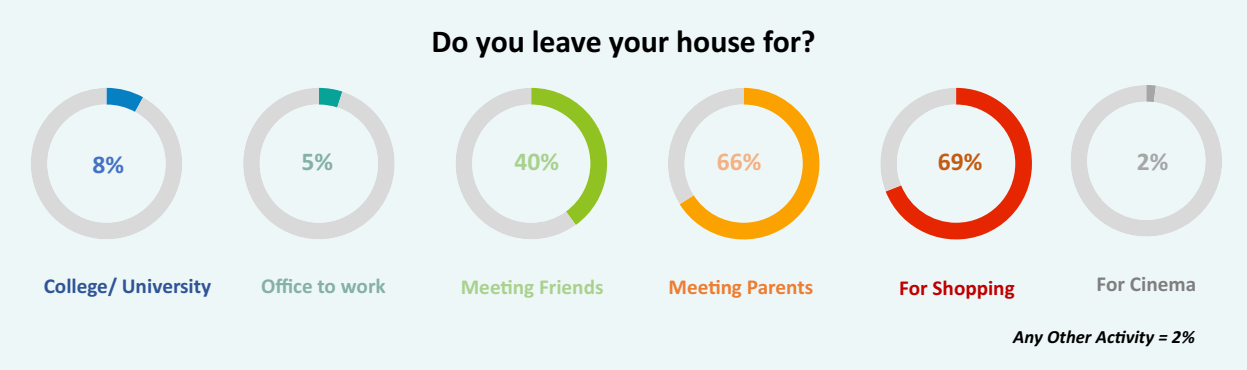
In patriarchal and conflict-ridden societies, women's mobility is a major barrier to women accessing their fundamental rights. the same has been true for the findings of the survey where women's lack of personal autonomy was also reflected in difficulties faced by

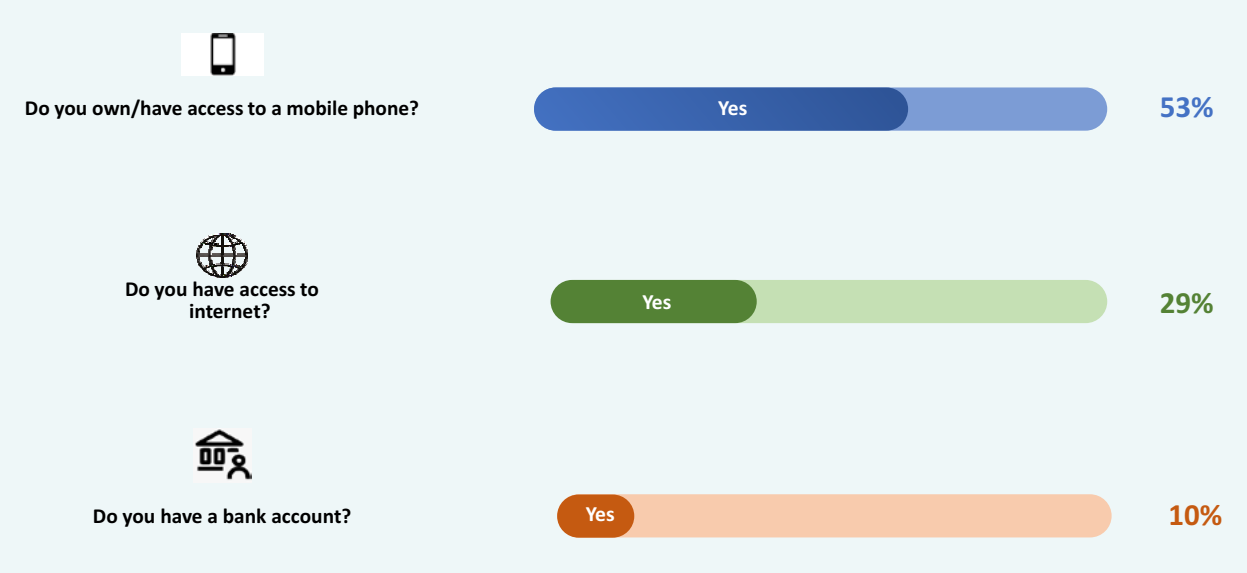


women in their mobility. Almost three-fourths of the participants (74%) reported that they have to take permission when going out of the house. The grantee of permission were overwhelmingly the male members of the household, with husbands accounting for close to 70%.

There were regional and age variations in this metric. Women from KP were most under compulsion to take permission when leaving the house (96%), while

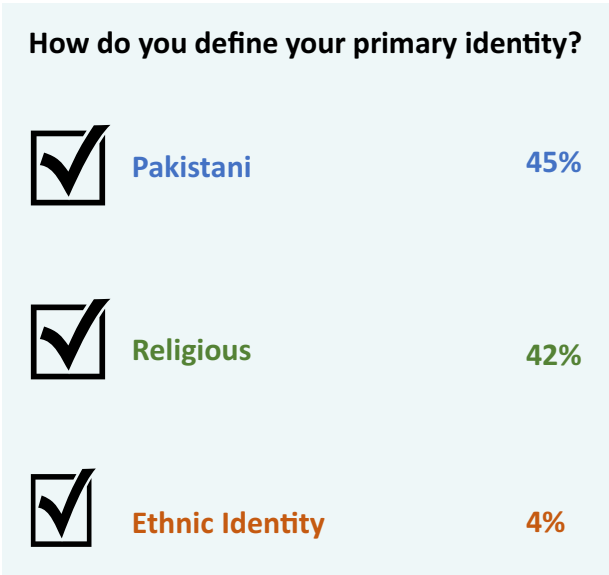


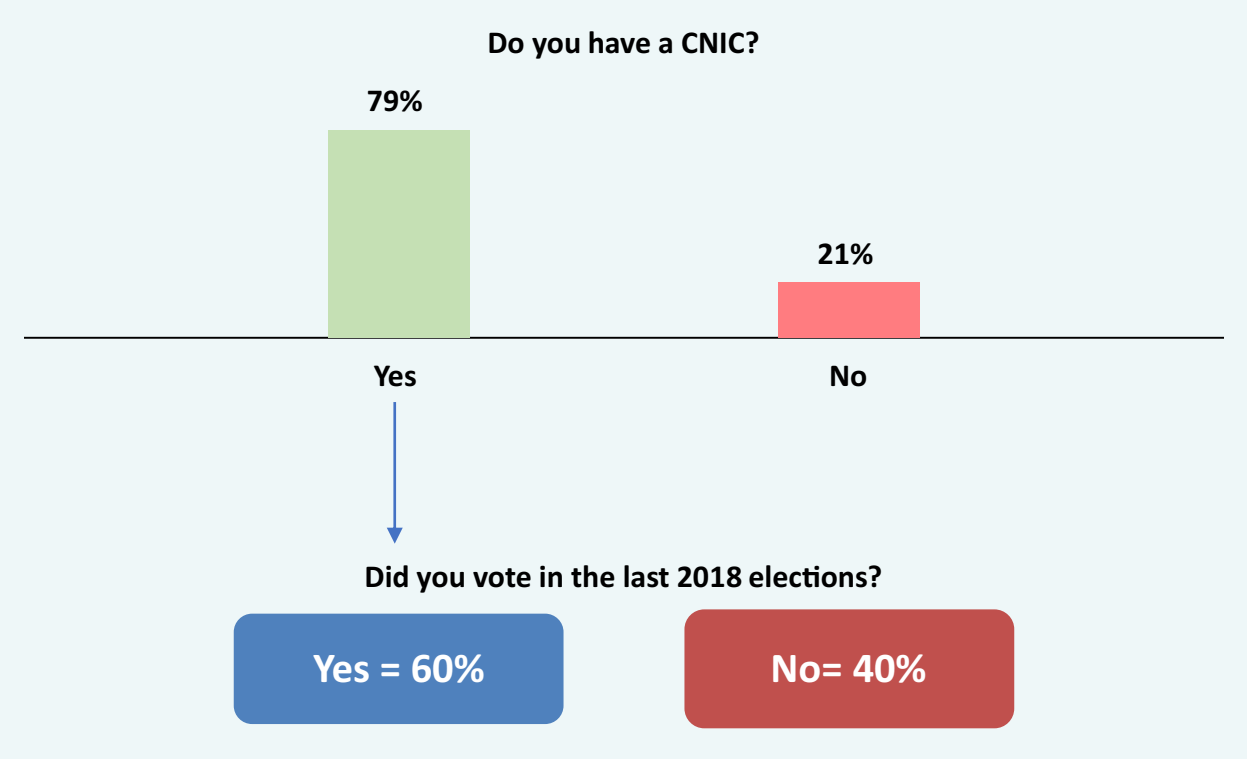




the percentage is also highest for younger women: 89% of young women compared to 53% of mature/ older women. Also, pertinent to note that 69% of the women reported leaving the house for shopping and 66% responded that they leave the house in order to meet their parents. While women's mobility has been subjected to permission from male relatives, it is interesting to note that shopping yielded the highest responses from women on why they leave their homes, which indicates at some level of freedom/ enjoyment of personal expressions for women.

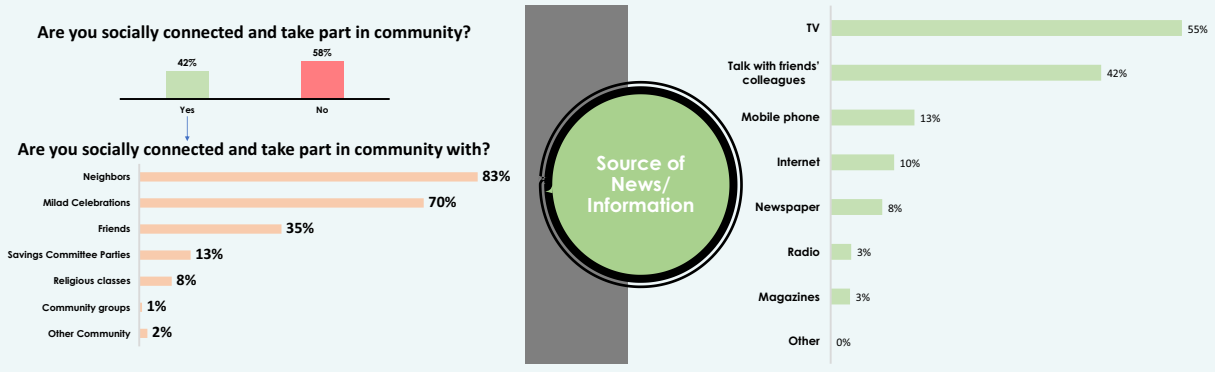
Another interesting finding of the survey has been with regards to the respondent's primary identity: 45% considered Pakistani to be their primary identity while 42% regarding their religious ideology to be their primary identity. Only 4% of the respondents regarded their ethnic identity to be their primary identity. Dominance of religious and national identities (Pakistani plus Muslim in case of majority respondents) supports patriarchal narratives of disharmony that may potentially manifest into violent extremism (Ref: Sadaf Ahmad's research on Al-Huda).

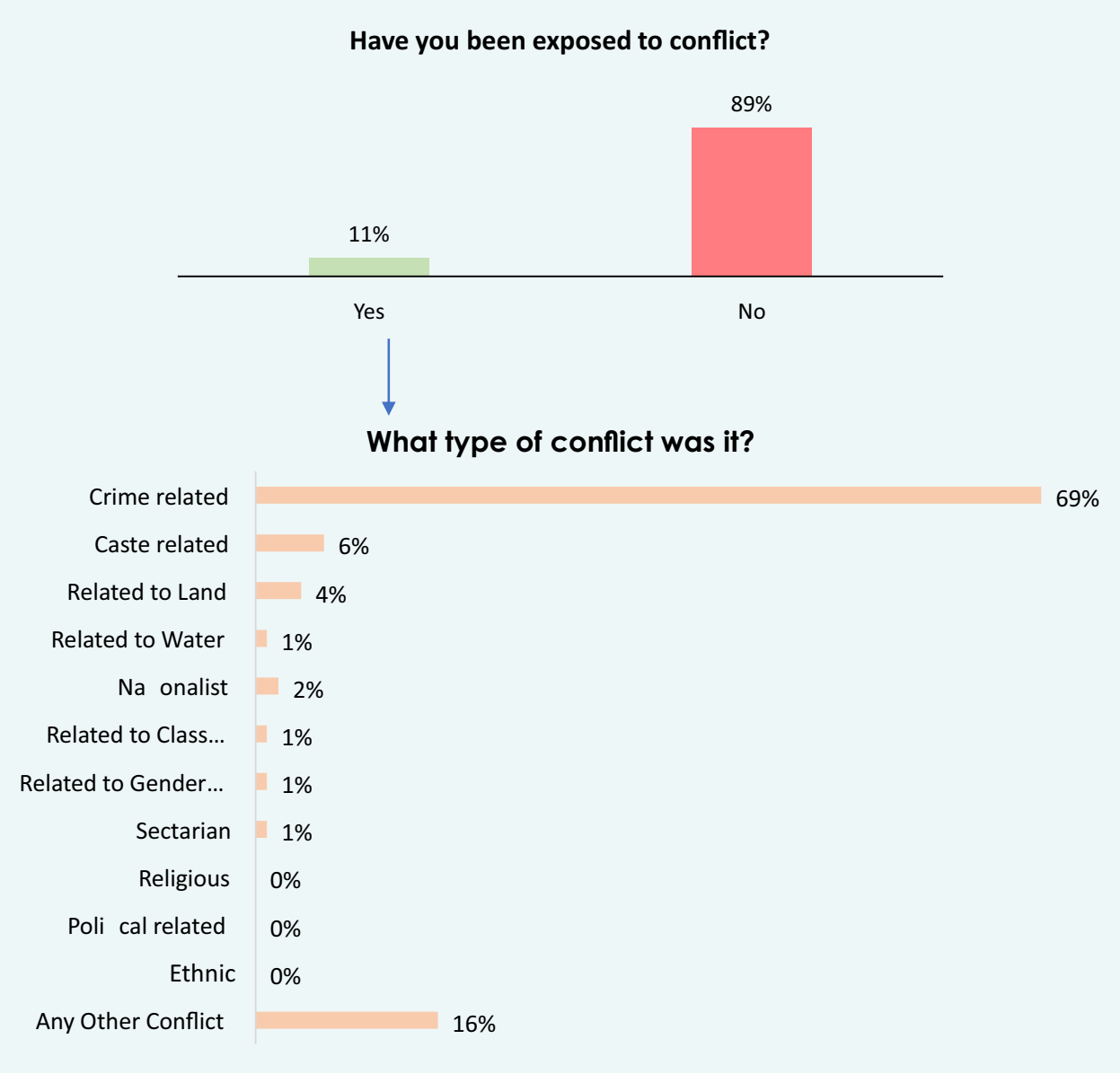




In terms of community and socio-political participation, the participants were engaged to a minimal to medium extent. Thus, for example, even while close to 80% of participants possess a Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC), only 60% of them voted in the last elections. Lack of CNICs of women results in exclusion from enjoying state benefits and services that are vital to women in situations of disharmony. While women's political participation has relatively increased (60%); lack of CNICs and lack of women's political participation results in disenfranchisement and distrust which leads to a weakened social contract between women and the state. This in turn results in women not accessing state functionaries in situations of disharmony and trust deficit regarding state institutions to protect their rights against violent extremism.

Furthermore, only close to 40% of women felt socially connected to and/or as having contributed to the local community. For the overwhelming majority, the major avenue of community participation was their interaction with neighbours (83%) and local *milad* gatherings (80%). It has been interesting to note



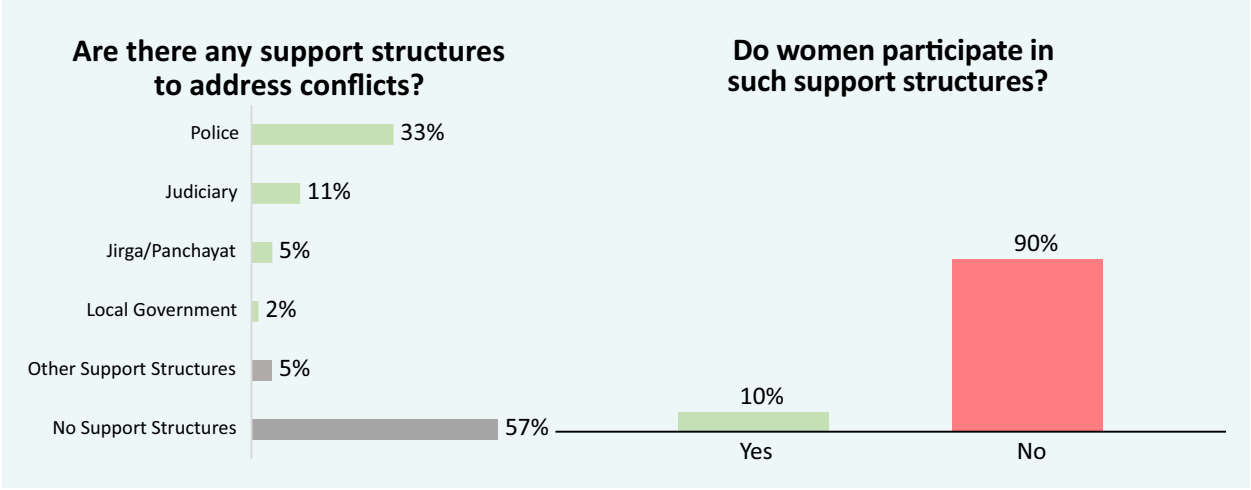


that women's religious participation through milad gatherings has been higher than women's political participation by voting in elections.

In terms of violent conflict, even while a majority of women (89%) had not experienced community-level conflict themselves, close to 20% had known someone who had taken part or been exposed to conflict. Moreover, close to 55% of the participants were cognisant that conflicts impact women disproportionally.

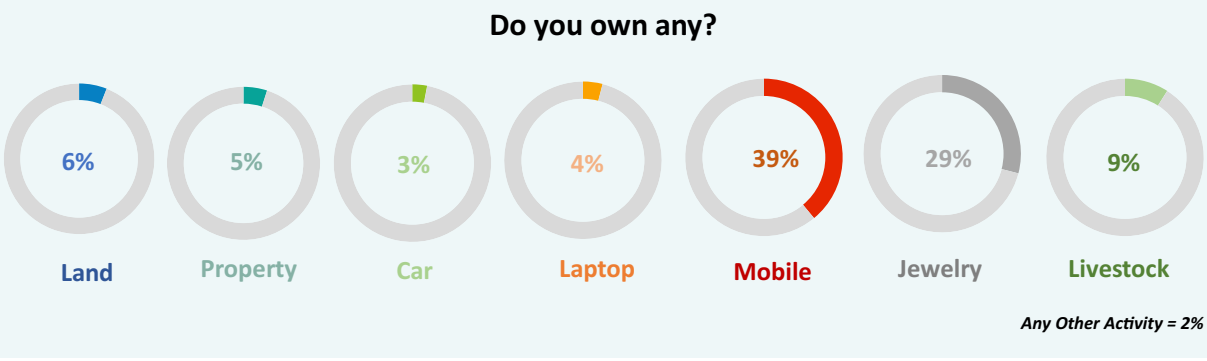
For those exposed to others involved in conflict, the overwhelming majority (89%) was of the everyday, criminal kind. Moreover, economic insecurity, domestic conflicts, and social tensions (such as over resources, land etc.) were cited as the most common reason for women taking part in conflict.

In terms of conflict and post-conflict scenarios, the overwhelming sentiment was one of women feeling abandoned/neglected in structures of community, support, and/or restitution. For example, close to 60% of women reported there being no structures which could ameliorate conflict and/or support victims (especially) women during and after the conflict.



How satisfied are you with?

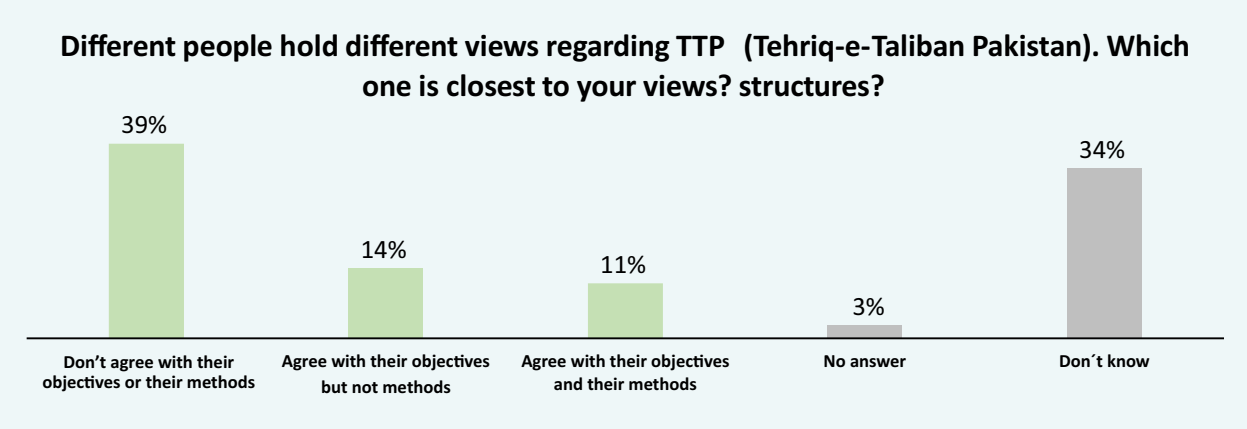
	Completely Dissatisfied	Completely Satisfied
1. Life	20%	80%
2. Judicial System	60%	40%
3. Police system	67%	33%

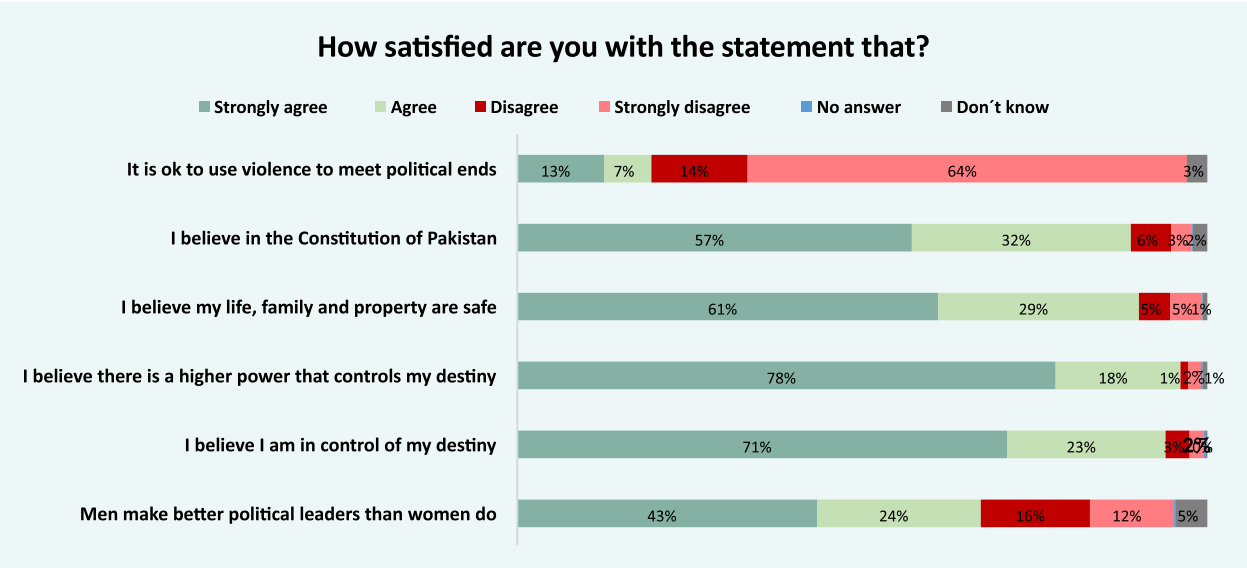


In pre and post conflict scenarios, women and girls remained invisible in terms of their needs, rights and leadership. Structures to address conflicts are largely absent but even in the rare instances where they are present, women's participation in such structures is virtually non-existent.

Tellingly, 90% of participants reported that women have no voice in post-conflict support structures, and thus have only limited avenues for participating in community affairs at such critical junctures.

However, even with this bleak picture of women's personal autonomy, community participation, and role in conflict amelioration, the women retain a positive outlook on social and political life, and also try to keep abreast of the world. For example, close to 55% of women get their news of the outside world through television and 39% own a personal cell phone. While Internet usage remains low overall (25%), there are





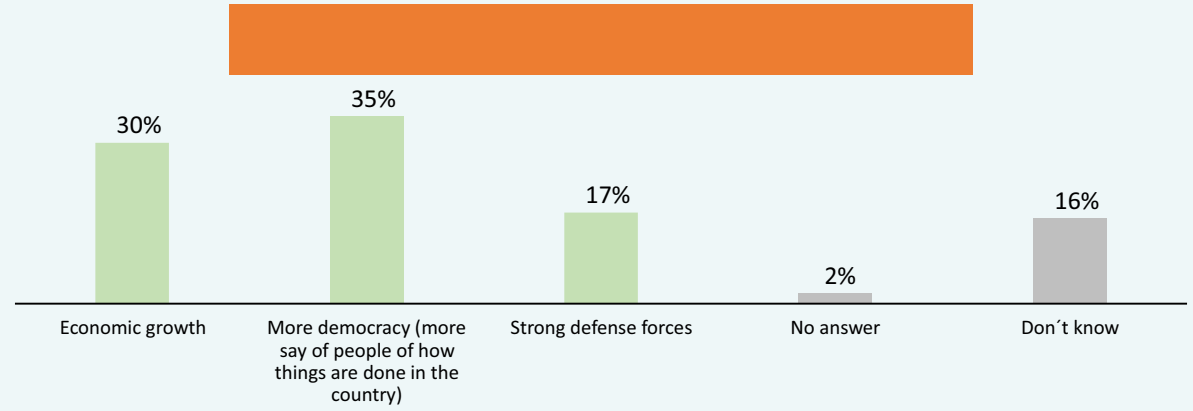
exceptions in terms of regional peripheries and age. Thus, 53% of women in Quetta reported using the Internet, and Internet usage was also highest among young women (over 30%).

Only 14% of respondents stated that they agree with the objectives of TTP but not their methods while 11% stated that they agree with both the objectives and methods of TTP. Interestingly, 34% of the respondents did not know whether they agreed with the objectives and methods of TTP. This point towards a certain susceptibility on the part of women, unaware of the violent ideologies of such forces, to be exposed to such forms of violent extremism.

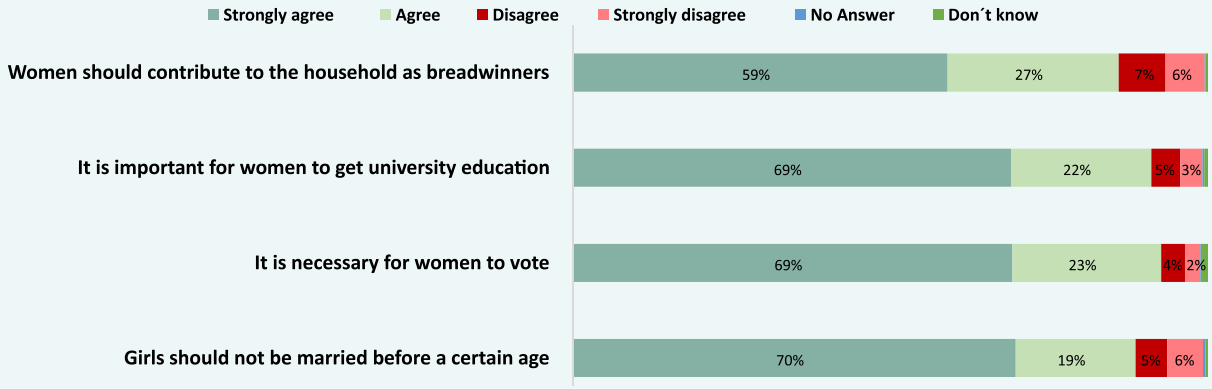
In contrast, in terms of political and social outlook, close to 80% disagreed with the use of violence in politics, and 85% believed that religion is a personal matter and should not be used to settle political scores. A similar proportion (79%) identified the Constitution of Pakistan as a social document they identify with. These figures point towards a growing understanding of politics and civics on part of women who are strengthening their relationship with the state.

Moreover, in terms of aims as a community and country, the highest scorers were economic growth (30%) and greater democracy in Pakistan (35%). Specifically, participants identified democracy with an active say of ordinary people in how affairs are run in the country.

People sometimes talk about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. listed are some of the goals which different people would give top priority. Would you please say which one of these you, yourself think is important?



How satisfied are you with the statement that?



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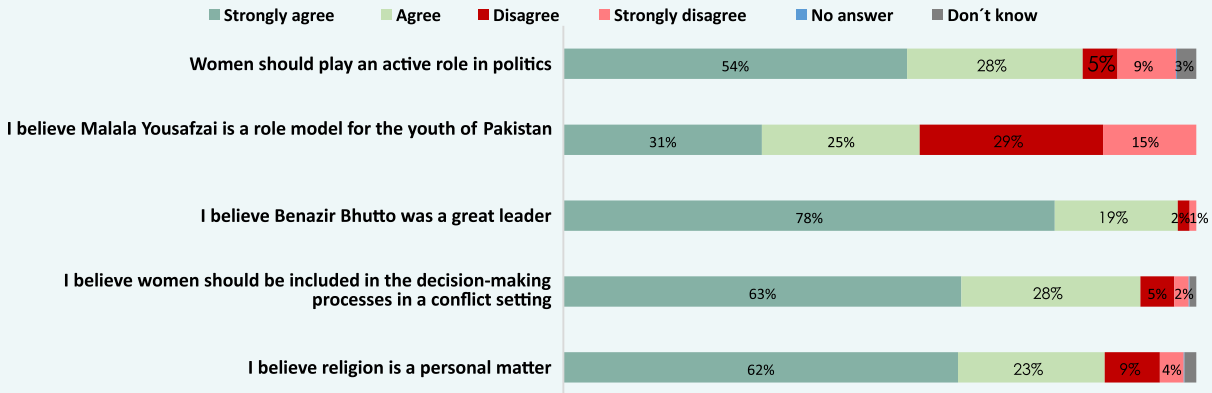
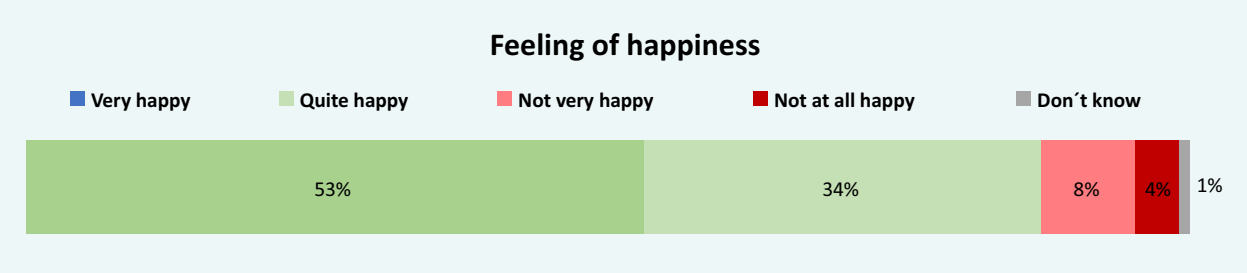




Internalised notions of patriarchy were evident in the responses where a large proportion (almost 40%) respondent women believe that men make better political leaders than women, however over 80% emphasised that women should play a greater role in politics (97% identified Benazir Bhutto as a great leader). Similarly, over 90% agreed that women should be part of decision-making during and after conflict scenarios.

Close to 90% also supported women's role as breadwinners in the house, in obtaining higher education, and that women should vote in elections. The women's responses pointed towards a greater need to make women and girls and their voices visible during pre and post conflict scenarios as well as political and state structures to transform state institutions into responsive and inclusive organisations.

Thus, overall the picture obtained of conflict, social engagement and aspirations among the female participants was a mixed one. In the current state, women generally experience limited domestic and public autonomy, with low levels of education, paid employment, and decision-making agency. This is especially so in conditions of conflict, where women overwhelmingly feel unengaged in decision-making mechanisms.

However, in terms of social and political outlook, the women retain a broadly optimistic outlook. The participants are strong believers in the social contract represented by the Constitution of Pakistan, eschew the use of violence in politics, and are overwhelmingly in favour of greater economic, social, and political participation of women in local and supra-local decision-making structures.

> "Women play a pivotal role in countering violent extremism; especially in tribal and semi-urban societies like Pakistan where they typically control and manage the household. Recently a number of case studies have revealed the substantial role of women in combating violent extremism."
>
> Dr. Farhan Zahid
> Police Service of Pakistan

Violence Against Women and Gendered Vulnerability

Before moving to an elaboration of women's role in conflict perpetuation and amelioration, it is important to establish the kinds of gendered violence which women face in both conflict and everyday situations. To be sure, the everyday kinds of violence are context dependent and vary across regions, ethnicities etc. This variation will be elaborated more in the subsequent section. However, the purpose of this section is to establish a baseline of the various kinds of exclusions and violence which serve as groundwork for more "spectacular" and generalised instances of conflict in communities.

As established in the surveys elucidated above, the most common type of violence faced by women is of the everyday kind, including criminal activity and domestic violence. Similarly, the most common form of exclusion and marginalization which is identified through interview in FGDs and KIIs is that of exclusionary experiences in everyday life, in both the public and domestic spheres. This can be of different kinds, ranging from violence within the household to that perpetuated in the public sphere but associated with ideologies of domesticity. This everyday exclusion is perpetuated due to patriarchal social structures and associated norms of domesticity. Moreover, a range of actors and factors – from family members to state functionaries and policies – work to perpetuate such patriarchal norms and the everyday exclusions that women face (often spilling over into overt violence).

As such, women narrate different kinds of violence which they encounter in everyday life. Repeatedly, the attitudes of men to a range of issues is pinpointed as the animating factor behind this everyday violence. Inside the household this can be due to issues of reproductive labour, such as food, upbringing of children, and everyday household decisions.

Outside the house, harassment and the "male gaze" is identified as the main form of violence. This affects all women, but particularly those who are in middle-class and working-class professions which require moving outside the house, such as teaching. Similarly, young women going out of the house for education purposes also face various kinds of subtle violence. This can be harassment on the streets, the difficulties of mobility due to inadequate public transport, and – in extreme but sadly all-too-common cases – the refusal of women's education altogether. As a participant from Karachi put it succinctly, "I think that stopping education itself is a type of violence."

Such everyday kinds of violence are associated with patriarchal structures and accompanying ideologies of domesticity. According to these, the "proper" place of women is within the household and domestic sphere.

> "The exclusion of women significantly weakens the efforts to combat violent extremism. Moreover, it results in creation of policies that do not effectively cater to the drivers of radicalization. Therefore, active involvement of women in policymaking in the fields of development and security is imperative for a secure, stable and peaceful Pakistan."
>
> Tariq Khosa
> Former Inspector General of Police (IGP)

This is manifested in various forms, from conspicuous violence, coercively induced dressing choices, to more subtle ways of devaluing women's labour and position in society. As a participant from Lahore put it, "my husband says that I am a sign of misfortune."

Thus, subtle violence of family members and wider society figures prominently in everyday narratives of women from all areas. This creates a perpetual and unrelenting fear among women, and deprives them of equal opportunities for in participation in various spheres of social and economic life. As a woman participant from a rural area of Lahore put it evocatively, "the question should be what we are *not* afraid of? *We are afraid of everything*."

With regards to domestic violence, a crucial point is in fact the very the comprehension of such acts of aggression as a form of violence/violation. As violence against women seems to be normalized. Thus, for example, a member of the state human rights council associated with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan narrated how during their work in KP, a survey once showed that "no domestic violence occurs in Abbottabad." On more personal inquiry, it was revealed that everyday experiences of corporal violence such as "slaps or kicks" is not even perceived as violence. Thus, a girl opined that "domestic violence is shooting a woman, breaking her bones, or throwing acid on her."

Thus, awareness of domestic violence, its definitions, and its extent too are sometimes not even registered as such. Lack of information and knowledge about rights such as bodily autonomy, different definitions of "dignity" and "violence", can therefore perpetuate situations of violence for women.

Women also showed awareness of deeper social structures which perpetuate patriarchal responses and attitudes among men, such as economic insecurity, generational frictions, and wider social conflicts where women's bodies become key stakes for assertion. Thus, along with patriarchal attitudes of men, issues of economic security (or lack thereof) were the most cited reason for perpetuation of such attitudes and violence against women. The fear and insecurity generated due to financial constraints, job loss, and/or lack of economic opportunities were constantly highlighted by women as facilitating domestic conflicts and insecurity. Particularly, the recent inflation in Pakistan due to austerity measures and economic slowdown were highlighted as key mediators of economic insecurity in households.

These kinds of domestic conflict can be manifested in various ways: between different generations (between fathers/uncles and sons/nephews/nieces), among individual families living in joint family arrangements (such as between families of two brothers), between women from different families, and within the family (between husbands, wives, and children). In all cases, these domestic conflicts lead to various types of pressures, such as of maintaining the household and keeping peace between domestic factions, in which women bear a disproportionate responsibility. Women also saw these kinds of economic insecurities, filtered through family and household structures, as leading to the domestic violence perpetuated by men.

Social and economic insecurities, and competition over resources, also lead to violence in other ways. The most common instance is of disputes over property and inheritance. Here, in order to keep property within patrilineal lineages, a woman may be pressured by male relatives to forego her inheritance. Conversely, the male relatives may simply refuse to hand over control of property to the rightful (female) owners. As a grassroots worker from Punjab related, this is then "compensated" with women receiving "gifts" from brothers on auspicious occasions such as Eid. In turn, the "voluntary" foregoing of property also increases "respect" of women in the eyes of in-laws. Thus, subtle pressures work though a kind of "coercive consent" may work to deprive women of their rightful shares in property.

Where women refuse to give up their claims, these land and/or property claims can lead to protracted

Tabassum Adnan (Human Rights Activist)

Tabassum Adnan is a women's rights activist belonging to the Swat Valley. She was a child bride; married of at the age of 13 and a victim of prolonged domestic violence which led to her divorcing her husband of 20 years. After her divorce, in search of support, Tabassum reached out to a local aid group working on women empowerment. Participation in this program inspired her to work on enhancing women's ability to be part of the decision-making processes in their communities. In her initial efforts, she tried to engage the all-male Jirgas in Swat but when she was refused membership, she started her own Jirga in 2013, which has become the first run solely by women.

The *Khwendo Jirga*, or Sister's Council

The *Khwendo Jirga*, or Sister's Council's was established to provide judicial support to women, advocate for free education for girls, protection of women and girl's health, training in both traditional and non-traditional vocational skills, provision of microfinancing, access for women to peace negotiations and voting rights. Moreover, the major aim of the Jirga was to protect women from violence, specifically, domestic violence, honour killings, dowry harassment and acid attacks.

In the beginning, the *Khwendo Jirga* faced opposition from both men›s Jirgas and even prominent women's rights activists. In 2014 an unfortunate incident changed the public's opinion on the Khwendo Jirga. A child was raped in Swat, and the authorities had failed to act in a timely manner. The *Khwendo Jirga* organized a public protest bringing visibility to the case and highlighting the importance of the issue. The suspects were apprehended and for the first time, a woman, Tabassum, was asked to sit on the male Jirga to assist in this case.

Tabassum's story is inspiring as she herself was a victim of early child marriage and domestic violence. She has since worked proactively towards lobbying for legislative reforms to prohibit child marriage. Due her exemplary services, Tabassum has been a recipient of multiple awards. In 2013, she was awarded the Human Defenders Award. In 2014 she was a nominee for the N-Peace Empowerment Award and in 2015 she won a U.S. State Department International Women of Courage Award. She has also received the Nelson Mandela Award 2016.

disputes. Here women are at a disadvantage due to limited access to means of justice and prevailing patriarchal attitudes within the criminal justice system. At its most extreme, it leads to open violence against women such as acid-throwing and even murder.

The precarious economic basis of community life also has its determinate on the prevailing social order. With economic crisis and insecurity, there are tendencies towards the break-up of the joint family system and increasing atomisation of life, especially in urban areas. Penetration of various information technologies and social media has also increased the spheres of awareness and aspiration in all parts of Pakistan.

Most importantly, it is now increasingly difficult to maintain even a lower middle-class household on one (male) income alone. As a result, women are increasingly being drawn into the sphere of paid labour, which often involves going out of homes. This increasing movement of women in the public and changing patterns of earning/household contribution in turn disturbs stabilised notions of gendered norms,

values, and positions in society. Issues of domestic violence, and gendered insecurity and harassment in public spaces, are therefore also integrally linked to the crisis of normative notions of masculinity which entail these wider socio-economic changes in Pakistani society.

Trust between women and close family:

For example, one of the themes which came up quite frequently in the FGDs and KIIs is that of a "crisis of trust between women and parents." Traditionally, parents and male members of the family have acted as "guarantors" of women's safety and autonomy within the circumscribed sphere of the household. Thus, as long as young women remained within a circumscribed sphere, they could exercise limited autonomy while being sure of the trust of parents and elders. However, as women have now become more active in spheres and spaces outside the household, the patriarchal bargain has come under stress, with women's increased autonomy and mobility generating suspicion among elders and males of the family (expressed as "crisis of trust between women and parents". This can result in an intensified patriarchal reaction against women. Thus, as women have become more aware and/or have taken up activities in the non-domestic sphere, this has disturbed stabilised notions of domesticity and gender roles. Access to digital technologies too can increase women's sphere of interaction and awareness beyond purely domestic and/or local environs. In addition, increasing urbanisation also brings with it interaction between previously separate communities. This can both increase cross-community exchange, but can also lead to hardening of community boundaries – especially in conditions of conflict over resources, space etc.

The effects of almost all these wider social changes play out in and over women's autonomy and agency. This can be manifested in various ways: women's education, marriage choices, access to public space etc. Thus, for example, respondents from Lyari (Karachi) spoke of an "extreme trust deficit" between girls/young women and parents, with issues of cross-ethnicity marriages and co-education figuring prominently in these "trust" issues.

Wider socio-economic changes can therefore, paradoxically, further reinforce and even invent conservative "traditions" as a means of maintaining patriarchal structures and to perpetuate respective positions of different communities during conflict. Fundamentally, these instances of patriarchal reaction and (attempted) reinforcement of family norms are indicative of the wider social and economic changes which are afoot in the wider polity.

Victims of Terrorism:

The last theme of prosaic, "everyday" violence which we can mention here is that of women victims in post-conflict situations. Many regions and communities in Pakistan have faced severe violence over the last two decades. These include "ethnic" gang wars in Karachi, sectarian violence in Balochistan, and fundamentalist terrorism in KP (including the Newly Merged Districts of former FATA). While we will explore the role and effects of these (more) "spectacular" conflicts on women in greater detail in the coming sections, it is important to point out here the prosaic nature of difficulties and violence faced by women in the aftermath of these conflicts.

Especially important here is the lack of support for victims of terrorism in communities such as the Hazara of Quetta. Here, women complained bitterly of the lack of support and restitution mechanisms for the family members of victims of sectarian violence. While government bodies have made official announcements of compensation for victims' families, these are rarely actualised. In fact, women are exploited by middle men and sexual exploitation is prevalent. Families are often left in a state of penury, and this takes its toll in various ways. Children's education is curtailed and some are pushed to take up jobs from a very young age. Due to economic and community uncertainty, practices of child and young age marriage have increased. Their issues unacknowledged, the women

> Women radicalization is a neglected and least understood area in Pakistan not only in research but policy making as well. Gendered-specific strategies should be included in PCVE policies and female law enforcement units should be established to deal with gendered-specific aspects of PCVE in Pakistan.
>
> Abdul Basit
> CVE and Terrorism Expert

complain of rampant mental health problems among victims' families.

Thus, a combination of prevailing patriarchal structures and wider social changes afoot in the polity have contributed to the everyday and prosaic forms of violence that women face. Economic insecurity, everyday conflicts over property, and restrictive gender norms fuel this kind of everyday violence. Moreover, the challenge to prevailing family structures due to increasing urbanisation, social atomisation, access to digital technologies, and women's presence in public sphere/economy, also contributes to the prevalence and incidence of these everyday forms of violence. Post-conflict situations also see specific detrimental effects on women and their everyday experience of violence.

The pressures faced by women in prevailing patriarchal structures can be effectively channelized by extremist organisations. Devaluation of women's autonomy and leadership, combined with women's generally weaker socio-economic status within and outside families, crucially inform the mode of women's involvement in conflict. Conversely, conflicts can capitalise on and deepen existing gendered cleavages. These forms of everyday violence and patriarchal structures also provide the base for negotiation, re-enforcement, and/or challenge to gender norms in situations of "spectacular" conflict. Therefore, it is to a greater elaboration of instances of prominent/wide-spread conflict in the community and women's role (or lack thereof) in these that we turn to in the next section.

Key lessons and opportunities:

- Everyday forms of violence – such as domestic violence and harassment during mobility in public – are the most commonly reported fears among women of all backgrounds.
- Attitudes towards domestic violence varies with access to knowledge and resources to confront such exclusion. Sometimes domestic violence may not even be recognised as such, and internalised as the "normal" course of things in women's lives.
- Economic and social issues figure prominently in women's narratives of motivating factors behind gendered violence – including familial property disputes, economically precarious situations, and changing gender norms as more women join the paid labour force in Pakistan.
- Changing social conditions – such as macroeconomic crises, urbanisation, and generational shifts – have also seen changing relations of trust between family members (such as between parents and young women). These have the effect of compounding restrictions and/or backlashes against women's assertion of autonomy and agency. Inter-generational trust building measures can be a potential avenue of intervention.

These can include measures like increasing familiarity of family elders of women's study and workplaces, and awareness-raising over differential generational challenges in contemporary society.

- Women suffer greatly in conflict-ridden areas, especially in families who have lost (male) breadwinner to terrorism. The Hazara women of Quetta have been particularly affected due to lack of restitution measures by the state and exploitation by middle-men.
- Mental stress due to facing everyday violence and conflict was a persistent theme among the respondents. Increasing community awareness, resources, and capacity with regards to mental health issues is crucial. This also offers an avenue of intervention, with community mechanisms of restitution offering the additional potential opportunity for increasing social cohesion and playing a role in conflict resolution.
- Everyday forms of violence and exclusion become basis for women's involvement in more "spectacular" forms of violence and conflict.

"As thought leaders, civil society representatives, and policy actors, Pakistani women have made great advancements in the domain of Women, Peace and Security and P/CVE in the last two decades. There is now an urgent need to translate this commitment and progress into tangible policy implementation frameworks. The next step should be the unanimous adoption of a Five-Year 'National Women, Peace and Security Action Plan' that stipulates targeted structural, policy, thematic reforms, and budgetary allocations in the formal security sector of Pakistan. Time to put our money where our talk is!"

Ammara Durrani
Assistant Resident Representative,
Development Policy Unit, UNDP Pakistan

Women in Conflict

Women join in conflict perpetuation for different motivations and come from various social backgrounds. At a general level, women's role in conflict is conditioned by prevailing gender norms within a region or community, and its subsequent interaction with conflict situations. As such, violence that takes place out of the context of conflict and gendered social structures elucidated in the last section provides a state of play or a "departure point" role in the instances where women join a conflict actively.

As shown in the quantitative surveys recounted above, women themselves pinpoint economic insecurity and prevailing social tensions as the most frequent triggers/motivations for women's involvement in conflict. In this section therefore we will elucidate the different motivations for women's perpetuation and joining in conflict, including with reference to prevailing gendered norms and social structures.

In both the FGDs and the KIIs, with experts who've worked on issues of conflict and violent extremism, what is most obvious is that prevailing gender norms and, crucially, suppression plays a crucial role in women actively participating in conflict. From the example of Mullah Fazlullah's movement in Swat in late mid-to-late 2000s to the attraction of outfits like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, gendered insecurities, hierarchies, and aspirations play a crucial role in making women amenable to taking part in and perpetuating conflict.

This complicates any linear notion of simply (formal) "education" or "awareness" being an antidote against extremism. It is in fact, the wider social structures which condition and motivate women's entry into extremism and conflicts. In fact, an experienced PVE professional summarised these motivating factors succinctly in three words: "*Family, Prestige, Identity*."

An environment of general gendered suppression within familial structures can make women amenable to extremist narratives and actions. Many examples can be provided in this regard. The case of women's support to Mullah Fazlullah and his fundamentalist movement in Swat is perhaps most famous. Here, there was already a historical memory of the Swat state whose legal code was called "Shariat" and was generally considered to be more efficient than the subsequent criminal justice system of the Pakistani state. However, Fazlullah specifically targeted women through his popular radio broadcasts through, initially, taking up issues of domestic violence, asking men to desist from domestic suppression, and following the "true" teachings of Islam. Women not only actively

> "Two factors have increased the role of women in spreading extremism. One, the growing trend of female empowerment globally and the increased role of internet in radicalization, making it easier to work from home. This calls for greater involvement of women in not only in CVE policy formulation but also in its implementation, by recruiting more women in organizations dealing with CVE."
>
> Tariq Parvez
> Former Head of NACTA
> and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)

gave support and material resources (such as their own jewellery) to the Fazlullah movement but also encouraged their children to join the movement. In this regard, women's quest for identity and prestige combined with more prosaic concerns regarding their sons' economic prospects. Thus, support of conflict among women combined ideological support and aspirations to material advancement in light of prevailing social and economic situation.

Similarly, women who have become ideologues of violent extremism are often those who, while in a subaltern state within familial structure, have demonstrable leadership qualities. These women with above a desire to prove themselves in the world, find in extremist narratives of religion a two-fold purpose. On one hand, demonstration of religious expertise and public piety becomes a medium for asserting their authority and increasing their prestige within familial and community structures. On the other hand, resort to religion as a medium of mobility also, paradoxically, reinforces gendered roles and causes minimal disturbance in prevailing norms/values of gender hierarchy. As such, the "prestige" and "identity" gained through resort to fundamentalist narratives of religion and public piety/religious expertise works both to debunk and reinforce prevailing social/ gendered hierarchies in the same moment.

In the case of women who move from mere propagation of extremism narrative to becoming part of militant organisations, the issues of identity, family, and prestige can be seen with even greater intensity. Thus, for example, an expert who has worked in the Pakistani state's deradicalization programme narrated how actively taking up the extremist cause and/or joining a militant network is often a case of rebellion against family norms.

This can take a number of forms. It can manifest itself as an avenue for proving one's mettle for leadership and autonomy. Another main avenue is that of sexual autonomy, especially with regards to choice of partners. In this case, the position offered by groups such as ISIS to females is crucial. Female adherents are offered a chance not only at heavenly redemption, but for becoming a very building bloc of a utopia on this earth: the Islamic State. Their status as wives of current fighters and mothers of future "pure" generations of the Islamic state thus offers the promise of a utopic (and fascistic) sublimation within the larger body politics of the Islamic state. As one respondent aptly summarised when asked about women's motivations for joining violent conflict: "girls feel that they are unwanted."

Violent organisations and terrorist groups also consciously target the most vulnerable groups in any social structure with the promise of "political emancipation". This includes women and various lumpen groups in society such as unemployed youth, criminal elements etc. The promise of social prestige and personal – including, sexual – agency is a large part of these organisations' appeal, and women's participation in these conflicts.

Often, it is also these parts of society which are not versed in the more traditional lineages of religious/ Islamic thought. As several scholars (such as Shahab Ahmed) have pointed out, violent Islamists' organisations' modernist interpretations of faith in fact go against the grain of much traditional Islamic thinking about authority, rule, and rebellion. Inter-generational and intra-familial fault-lines find an avenue for expression through regressive and violent interpretations of religion.

Thus, suppression within prevailing familial structures, being misfit in reigning social hierarchies, opportunities for gaining identity and prestige, and a break from more "traditional" and hierarchy-centred interpretations of religion, opens the avenue towards reactionary and violent assertions of the same. As Olivier Roy points out, this must be understood less of a "radicalisation of Islam" and more as the "Islamisation of radicalism" (Roy, 2017 Guardian).

Moreover, once women are actively embroiled in these conflicts and in violent organisations, participation can

Ruqsana Najfi (Hazara Community Balochistan)

Ruqsana Najfi is a social and political activist from the Hazara community who has been working in the social sector for over 20 years. As an activist and has undertaken multiple roles starting as a political worker for the Pakistan People's Party to working for the Aurat Foundation. In the early 2000s, she was selected as a member of her union council progressing to the district council.

Thousands have died in the ongoing conflict between rival hard-line Shia and Sunni sects in Pakistan, but the Hazaras have particularly suffered as a result of this sectarian conflict. In 2009, Ruqsana's husband was killed in a targeted attack in the month of Ramadan when he was intercepted by terrorists on his way to work.

This incident did not deter her resolve, Ruqsana became more proactive in spreading awareness for the rights and protection of the Hazaras, and defying tradition, she gave a speech at her husband's funeral demanding protection for her community. Ruqsana has been working for the rights of the Hazara community and encourages women to participate in economic activities to gain financial independence and contribute to the society.

She emphasised the importance of women's economic empowerment by stating:

"A lot of politicians and development organizations ask me what can be done to improve the lives of the women in the Hazara community in Balochistan. My response to them is to invest towards the development of Technical and Vocational Training Centres for the women in the community so that they are empowered by developing these skills."

take on a path dependency of its own. This is especially so in the case of so-called "jihadi brides", who get married to active fighters, are sexually abused, and/or bear children with militants. The stigma of sexual abuse and, particularly, the presence of new-borns completely changes the equations for these young women. Even if the previous participation had been based on ideological zeal, having new-borns makes them more dependent on the support and (quasi) familial structures offered by militant organisations. As such, extricating one's self out of conflict becomes even more difficult.

This is compounded by the fact that militant outfits often do not let the new-born babies get registered with the names of their biological fathers (Dr. Maria Sultan KII). The marriages with fighters of extremist organisations are not officially recognised, and therefore any children born during the relationship are also unregistered. As a result, these young women are reluctant to return to their countries of origin or normal life, where fatherless children are not recognised. As such, the even minimal social security structures offered by militant organisations appeal to maternal instincts of new mothers, even trumping other forms of insecurity they might face in these violent contexts. As such, "Stockholm syndrome" of young women with regards to their militant abusers also has a concrete basis i.e. in the legitimacy of action and support provided by these organizations to young women and mothers.

It is important to note that the phenomenon of "jihadi brides" has not been conclusively shown to be prevalent in Pakistan. However, experts interviewed with regards to militancy and gender, such as Dr. Maria Sultan referenced above, prominently highlighted the familial aspects of women's involvement in extremism.

As such, this remains an area of further research for elucidating gendered aspects of extremism and social cohesion in Pakistan.

As such, with regards to women's participation in militant fundamentalist organisations, social and familial fault lines are mobilised. To be sure, these factors interact in complex ways with others too. For example, in the case of Mullah Fazlullah in Swat, the misplaced strategic policies of the Pakistani state itself was a major factor in providing space to sundry religious militants and facilitating their popularisation. However, these "top-down" factors are only as effective as they prey on reigning social fractures and are able to insert themselves into the everyday life of communities. The lure of prestige, identity and alternative forms of identification offered through militant and millenarian forms of violence is effectively able to intervene within these social fault-lines to attract vulnerable social groups, including women.

Apart from religious millenarian organisations, women have also been involved in other types of conflict. In Karachi, for example, ethnic and sectarian conflict have been persistent themes over the last few decades. Muaz Goth, a rural area in the outskirts of the city, has seen conflict between the local Sunni and Shia communities. But at the basis of this social fault-line taking a violent and conflictual manifestation was the issue of water scarcity in the area. As women are much more involved in social reproduction labour (such as household tasks, bringing up children etc.) compared to men, the scarcity of water and associated social tensions were experienced much more directly by them. As a result, when resource conflicts emerged in the area along Sunni-Shia lines, women played important supporting roles for men taking part actively in the conflict.

In a related, but different case in Lyari, gang wars – in the garb of ethnic conflict – have been particularly severe over the last decade and a half. Conflict in Lyari has had particularly deleterious effects on social life. On one hand, there have been spates of ethnic killings between members of different communities, including Baloch, Sindhis, and Kutchis, and multiple rounds of police and para-military operations. These "ethnic" conflicts and gang wars are lubricated by norms of toxic masculinity and bravado. In turn, these norms of masculinity and assertion play out over women's bodies, especially through harassment of women from opposing communities and stricter policing of women's from one's own community.

On the other hand, the Lyari area – once a center of communal diversity and progressive political activism in Karachi – has acquired an unjustified association with "gangs" and warfare. In turn, this affects the economic opportunities and sense of self of thousands of young people from this area, who are refused or discriminated against in jobs simply on the basis of having "Lyari" as their place of residence on their ID cards (Kirmani). As such, conflict has not only had effects on increased local community structures (making them more insecure), but also has contributed to economic insecurity and disconnect with regards to the wider urban environment.

In such a context, FGD participants from Lyari reported that in some cases women played an active part in the conflict in the area. Extreme poverty and lack of opportunities/prospects made gang warfare a means of gaining both resources and power/prestige. Thus, where prevailing notions of toxic masculinity played into policing of women, some women also lived power vicariously through their relatives' participation in the conflict.

As such, prevailing social structures and the tendencies for hierarchy-suppression within these are integral factors in inducing women's participation in and perpetuation in conflict. Violent organizations can offer a variety of compensations to women who generally feel ignored in incumbent social structures. These can range from opportunistic paens against domestic violence (as in the Mullah Fazlullah case in Swat), role as "builders" of a "pure" nation (as in

> Making Pakistan and particularly KP gender sensitive will go a long way in helping the females overcome what are the daily hurdles of their life. By introducing female representation in parliamentary boards of political parties to sensitizing the public to gender violence to setting up women desks in police stations there is a lot that needs to be done. A good start would be increased visibility of women in politics, sports and the civil service, all traditionally male dominated areas.
>
> Samar Bilour
> Member Provincial Assembly KP

ISIS), structures of social security for new mothers, avenues for assertion of leadership and competence, and secondary roles as encouragers of conflict for reasons of prestige and economic security (as in Lyari, Karachi).

Conflicts thus serve a double function: they grow out of – and can perpetuate – existing societal cleavages including that of patriarchy; in addition, they also offer opportunities for women to negotiate their position in complex ways. Women's involvement in conflicts are crucially conditioned by prevailing patriarchal norms and social structures. Most often, conflicts lead to deepening of patriarchal violence as women's bodies become crucial nodes for the playing out of different groups' notions of "honour" and "belonging". However, as processes which disturb stabilised social structures, conflicts can also offer opportunities for emergence of leadership from among new groups, including women and lower classes. Therefore, the next section will focus the dynamics of women's leadership conflict situations, including a greater understanding of the form and sustainability of women's leadership during and after conflict.

Key lessons and opportunities:

- Extremist organisations target the very weakest segments in any social structure, including the young and unemployed, and women. Incumbent social structures and their exclusions are therefore key to understanding women's involvement in conflict.
- More than education, prevailing familial structures and desires for autonomy and prestige account for women's active involvement in violent conflict. Demonstration of religious piety or expertise becomes a means of mobility and gaining prestige.
- Increasing awareness among women – due to factors such as increasing literacy, penetration of telecommunication technologies etc. – also leads to broadening of social aspirations.

In case of patriarchal restrictions on women's agency, these aspirations of leadership and prestige can make women vulnerable to the pull of extremist ideologies. This was borne out in women's involvement in both religious and ethnic forms of militancy.

- Factors relating to path-dependency – such as social security provided by organisations for women's new-born babies – perpetuate women's involvement in violent organisations.

- A key area for future research is to understand the path dependencies of women's involvement in violent extremism through focused research among women who have been part of such organisations. Thus internal structures, decision-making, invectives, and (where applicable) coercion by these organisation with regard to women need to be studied to understand women's entanglement in violent extremism.

- Economic insecurity can also lead women to participate in violent extremism either directly or indirectly (such as encouragement provided to male family members' involvement in ethnic conflict and "gang wars" in Lyari, Karachi).

- Women's active involvement becomes especially likely when these conflicts affect the sphere of social reproduction with which women's labour is directly related, such as conflicts over local resources and amenities (water, electricity etc.)

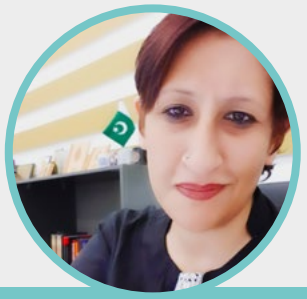
Women's Leadership in and post-Conflict

As discussed in the last section, prevailing gender norms and social structures determine how women are incorporated in different forms of conflict. When women do come to play an active role in perpetuating or taking part in conflict, it is these wider social structures that shape the mode of their participation in extremist narratives and violent organisatons. As such, while women often take up prominent positions within militant formations, these often end up reinforcing patriarchal norms, such as through elevating their "special" status as "mothers" or "brides" of the millenarian community.

The flipside of this mode of elevation of women's status within militant formations is of course the wider valourisation of masculinist violence. So while women may play prominent roles in violent organisations, women outside the organisation itself become victims of the intensification of regressive and masculinist norms.

For example, as a grassroots activist from Thar (Sindh) narrated, situations of conflict and post-conflict can shrink space for women's leadership and autonomy. This is especially so when sexual violence (ranging from harassment to assault and rape) is deployed as a way of asserting different conflicting groups' "superiority". In post-conflict situations, sexual violence can also be used for sporadic and unorganised "revenge" purposes.

Moreover, in some areas such as parts of Sindh, conflict resolution can even involve the "exchange" of women between different sides as a means of reconciliation and peace. Thus, not only are women not included in this (one-sided) "peace process", but space to assert their autonomy and agency may even shrink in such situations. As such, while conflicts often open space for emergence of new social groups to leadership, masculinist violence can work to hinder the emergence of women's leadership even in these situations of rupture.



> "Efforts to come up with a holistic, robust CVE framework will be ineffectual if women, who happen to be lead actors in shaping the direction of a society at the micro and macro levels, are left out of the discourse. CVE is a process that demands inclusivity, participation, and a diverse set of views, things that women bring to the table. The inclusion of women will only streamline and harness the country's CVE campaign. Ignoring them is not an option."
>
> Dr. Rabia Akhtar
> Director Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR)

Leading on from the above, it is women's – idealised, if not actual – confinement to the sphere of domesticity and social reproduction which also determines their leadership roles in conflict amelioration. For example, as an elected female politician from Peshawar recounted, women from her constituency took up prominent roles when conflict situations pervaded the sphere of the household and children. This could be seen in women's role in shaping the discourse after prominent cases of child sexual abuse came up. She also recounted that women in her area have even take

up street demonstrations in response to civic issues such as availability of water and excessive billing for amenities.

Thus, the embroiling of conflict situations with major disturbances in the sphere of social reproduction often makes it more amenable – and even acceptable – for women to come out of homes actively join protests and campaigns. The flip side of this tendency is that women's leadership in conflict amelioration is limited to what may be termed "fire-fighting responses". That is, women's leadership emerges in situations of conflict, however once the conflict ends, older norms of gendered hierarchy reassert themselves. As a result, while conflicts may create spaces for emergence of female leaders, they are reabsorbed into patriarchal structures and roles once some kind of "normalcy" returns.

However, once the conflict abated, women often went back to their "traditional" roles, as confined to certain kinds of household and extra-household labour. Notwithstanding the real gains (such as increased girls' education and womens' participation in leadership), overall the trend was of women retaking a backseat. Thus, while rupture provided space for women's leadership, in the absence of genuine redistribution of material resources in favour of women (such as property structures), the gendered power structures remained intact albeit with some positive changes for women in these areas.

The different forms of leadership exhibited by women in conflict can also be understood in relation to these wider material structures and social networks of ownership, control, and change. For example, the legislation enacted in Pakistani parliament with regards to sexual harassment policies in workplaces was the result of close to a decade of dedicated lobbying and activism by the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) led by Dr. Fauzia Saeed. Dr. Saeed herself began working on this issue in late 1990s and early 2000s after her own experience of facing harassment while working for the UN in Islamabad.

Facing inaction, often due to the paucity of even recognition of sexual harassment as a problem, Dr. Saeed formed a network of activists and researchers through the AASHA. They worked on public campaigns to raise awareness around the issue, while simultaneously forming a policy document. Through lobbying they initially persuaded 350 organisations to adopt the policy. Once the policy was successfully implemented in these organisations, efforts were stepped up to incorporate into national and provincial legislations. Where organisations have adopted the code of conduct prepared by AASHA, there has been quick and substantive action against perpetrators when complaints of sexual harassment have been received. However, several large and influential national institutions (such as the military and the national airline) have been much slower in this regard (Nosheen Abbas Huffington Post).

The success of these efforts was crucially dependent on lobbying and the kinds of networks formed between women (and men) of mostly middle-class and upper-middle class, professional backgrounds. Thus, the mode of women's activism and leadership exhibited in this case was crucially informed with material structures women were involved in. The AASHA women could draw upon different kinds of networks and were also agitating for a different issue (recognition of and measures against sexual harassment in workplaces) rather than redistribution of material resources per se. Thus, the latter activism and leadership took a different form.

The mobilisation of women's networks also emerges as an important theme in actualisation of women's leadership in conflict situations. In AASHA cases this can be clearly discerned. Similarly, research respondents also recalled cases where women have been successful in obtaining their inheritance even in face of opposition from immediate relatives (such as the late father's brothers). This was made possible in one case in Gujrat through the presence of a lawyer among the sisters fighting for inheritance. The lawyer sister was able to both navigate the criminal justice

system and leverage her contacts with prominent civil society persons to ensure that the inheritance was decided in favour of the sisters.

Similarly, in another case in Turbat, the affected woman was being deprived of land which her late mother had bought and named for her. However, in face of opposition from disputing parties, the woman was able to leverage her informal contacts with older residents of the community. These older residents, including men, were then able to mobilise the community through both formal and informal networks in order to support the said woman's right of inheritance.

Another example can be seen in the case of Christian community of Youhanabad, Lahore. In the wake of fundamentalist attacks on the community in 2015, tensions between local Muslim and Christian had increased, with male members playing a leading role in conflict. Eventually, the metro bus service stop to the area had also been closed, leading to much hardship especially among women employed as factory and domestic workers in other parts of the city. In this situation, it is the Christian women who took the initiative and formed a group for negotiation. These women met different faith groups and even met the Imam of the local mosque within the mosque to defuse tensions (a unique happening as women, let alone Christian ones, are rarely seen in mosques). Their pro-activeness bore fruit with tensions being reduced and the bus service eventually resuming.

Respondents from Balochistan also narrated examples of women's leadership in conflict. In context of a violent business dispute in Central Balochistan, an activist and lecturer recounted that, in contrast to the Pashtun community in the province, the place of Baloch women in the community is different. Here, women going to an opposite party's house holds a lot of significance and is an irrevocable sign that a group is serious about peace. In the said dispute too, where the dispute was both of a business and tribal nature, it was women of opposing groups to go to each other's homes.

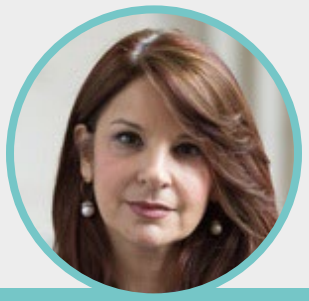
Relatedly, the case of prominent lawyer Jalila Haider of the Hazara community was also recounted.

The Hazaras of Quetta have faced brutal sectarian violence at the hands of extremist groups over the last two decades and their social opportunities (education, business etc.) devastated. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the community has traditionally had higher education and mobilisation levels than those around them. Similarly, democratic and progressive parties have a strong foothold within the community, with women having prominent voices within these. It is in this context, that Ms. Haider gained prominence as a dedicated lawyer and brave human rights activist taking issues of Hazaras and other communities of Balochistan.

As such, the presence of latent support networks in the community and/or civil/political society are crucial determinants of whether women take up leadership roles in times of conflict. Most often, these instances of women's leadership are reabsorbed back as the older social structure reasserts itself. This is especially so in (the majority) cases where a wider redistribution of material resources (such as property, control of resources, means of production etc.) does not take place. In the absence of such transformative redistribution, older patterns of gendered labour and social hierarchy reassert themselves. In most cases, however women's leadership therefore ends up being a temporary, "fire-fighting" response to situations of stress and rupture.

However, as can be seen from the above, there are many instances of women taking up and sustaining leadership roles in and after situations of conflict. This is crucially dependent on not just transformation of material resources, but also the kinds of networks through which women's initiative is initially organised. In case these networks of sociability and support can be sustained and generalised (such as in the spheres of civil and political society), women's leadership can outlast the duration of the conflict itself.

Redistribution of key resources and access to networks of support are therefore crucial determinants of women's long-term involvement in leadership during and post-conflict situations. Moreover, women's leadership draws upon specific capacities and responds to gender-specific injuries endured during conflict situations. However, among security institutions and in policy-making contexts, there is still a very limited cognisance of the gendered aspects of conflict. In this regard, neither women's involvement in conflict nor women's specific role in promoting social cohesion – whether through state or civil society – is well-understood. It is therefore crucial to see women's role in civil and political society, especially with regards to their role in security-related spheres (such as policy-making, law enforcement agencies etc.). Facilitating women's role in security-related spheres not only holds potential to make policy-making and implementation more gender-sensitive, but can also encourage more women leaders and "role models" to emerge on a sustainable footing. Therefore, it is to women's role in the security sector, law enforcement, and policy-making that we turn to in the next section of this report.



"Women play a complex role in violent extremism: both as VE actors as well as social enablers for community resilience against VE. There is however a lack of understanding of drivers of VE in women in Pakistan and there is insufficient empirical data on women radicalization."

Dr. Simbal Khan
CVE Specialist

Key lessons and opportunities:

- Conflicts disturb stabilised social structures and thus open up space for emergence of new leaderships. For women, this is a double-edged sword: conflicts can both create space for women to emerge as leaders, but can also lead to backlash and reinforcement of patriarchal oppression.
- Women's leadership is conditioned by wider conditions of social reproduction and prevailing normative values. Thus, women's leadership can also draw upon essentialised notions of "femininity" and "motherhood", which often leads it to be a "fire-fighting response" i.e. women's leadership in the community is asserted in times of crisis but then traditional norms are asserted once

conditions move back towards some kind of "normality".

- The key determinant of the longevity, effectiveness, and sustainability of women's leadership in conflict are the material resources and networks they are able to draw upon. In situations where conflicts result in substantive redistribution of material resources (such as property), women's leadership is more effective and sustainable. In the absence of such, "fire-fighting" responses become more prevalent.

- Existing social networks and capacities are crucial determinants of whether women's leadership is asserted during conflict. Women mobilise different types of networks, for example according to their educational or occupational status, and/or existing levels of women's public involvement in a community. These networks are crucial in determining the specific form of mobilisation (i.e. direct action, advocacy etc.) and effectiveness of women's leadership.

- Building of social networks and capacities is essential for sustaining women's leadership in conflict and post-conflict situations. This kind of capacity- and network-building must happen in times of peace/no conflict, through initiatives such as women's community centers. Different types of capacities can be built, including building community confidence/solidarity and more advocacy-focussed forms of activism. These networks will then have the potential for mobilisation in times of conflict and rupture.

- Specific trainings with regards to women's role in conflict and as peace-makers can be incorporated in CSO activities and programs. Interaction of women community leaders with state institutions (such as police), and understanding the norms and procedures therein, can also be incorporated in these trainings. These will not only help build women leaders' networks (to be mobilised in times of conflict), but can also help build greater gender sensitisation among security institutions.

Women in Security Sector, Law Enforcement, and Policy-Making

Over the last decade, there has been a slow shift in state priorities especially when it comes to dealing with violent extremist organisations. At one level, this has been related to the concrete rhythms of geopolitics. In the post-9/11 environment, with the "war of civilisations" narrative gaining much ground due to imperialist interventions and millenarian violence, a general war-weariness and wariness against extremist ideologies has developed.

In the specific context of Pakistan, these changes have been slow-to-come and have followed a tortured path. Given the instrumental patronage of fundamentalist groups for geopolitical gains over the last four decades, the realisation of their futility and danger has dawned slowly. Since at least the 1970s, Pakistan's military established has patronised extremist groups, often in collaboration with major world powers such as US and Saudi Arabia), for regional geo-political aims. However, this policy came under great tension in the post-9/11 era with the US-led NATO alliance targeting terrorist groups, and Pakistani decision-makers prevaricating in their support of selected groups. However, in light of brutal fundamentalist violence in "core" Pakistani areas (such as Lahore and Rawalpindi) from mid-2000s onwards, and especially the horrifying Army Public School Attack in Peshawar in 2014, public opinion has turned firmly against millenarian and fundamentalist violence.

In this context, different state actors – especially the security establishment – have started taking steps forward to dissociate (even if not completely) with religious fundamentalist groups and curtail their influence in civil/political society. This may be seen in the campaigns against fundamentalist groups and, crucially, in verdicts such as the Asia Bibi blasphemy case, where state institutions have acted to secure more pluralist outcomes – often against much organised public pressure from myriad extremist

> "Our society is very controlling of women. We cannot even grow our nails with our choice. In my family, if I grow my nails, my brother brings a nail cutter and asks my mother to make me cut my nails."
>
> Andaleeb Inam
> A student from Swat

groups (Zaheer, Independent 2019). Therefore, it is fair to say that – even though much remains to be desired and many strategic policies need to be reformulated – there have been indications of shifts within the state with regards to dealing with violent conflict and organisations of various hues. While some groups have been actively targeted by the military and other security institutions, there has been an effort to induce others into the "mainstream" of Pakistani politics (Bukhari and Gillani, 2019 TNS).

Considering this shift, it is interesting to note the progress made with regards to incorporation (or lack thereof) of a gender-specific agenda in the state and policy responses to conflict and violent extremism. Here, an activist who has served on the KP Commission for the Status of Women put it well: "the problem in Pakistan is that we always want to portray them [women] as victims." As such, there has been a focus on mere passive deliverance of "aid" to women (and

that too in a highly limited and flawed manner), rather than a concerted effort to raise their levels of self-direction, autonomy, and leadership. Conversely, this has also been effected in the lack of gender-sensitive voices in security institutions and policy-making, and lack of representation, and devaluing women's agency when it comes to both perpetuation and amelioration of conflict. For example, women represent only 2% of total police officers in Pakistan, with Balochistan province – a major centre of extremist violence – only having 0.48% participation of female police officers, and Gilgit-Baltistan (3.1%) having the highest percentage – other provinces hover around the 1/5-2% range (DAWN Apr 26 2017).

Governmental schemes have often led to reinforcement of "traditional" gender roles, rather than challenging these. For example, as we have described in a previous section, the compensation policy for victims of terrorist attacks has been highly uneven and of limited efficacy. In turn, this has left to large numbers of women from affected communities (such as the Hazara) being left in highly precarious conditions, and even more vulnerable to gendered degradation and violence. Additionally, limited recognition of women as autonomous agents has also led to limited recognition of women's potential contribution to security policy-making. In turn, this has been a way to reinforce wider structures of patriarchal hierarchy.

With shifting state orientations towards security and extremist organisations, there has also been a steady rise of women in security institutions such as the police and other law enforcement agencies. As a female police officer narrated to us, about a decade ago when she joined the force, there was only a single female officer in the whole country, but today the number is close to fifty. However, while the numbers of women in security institutions have been increasing[1], fundamental structural barriers remain to fostering of women's leadership and capacity in the domain of security.

Several of these structural, institutional, and individual barriers can be recounted here. At the individual level, issues around attitude and accommodation are paramount. The most prominent issue here is of course the attitude of male police officers, who often do not take female colleagues seriously. The reluctance to include female colleagues in key decisions excludes the incorporation of gender-sensitive to conflict amelioration and prevention. As we have recounted above, this can be a key limitation as it hinders realisation of the full spectrum of motivations and aspirations that militant organisations prey on.

Relatedly, the high barriers for entry to women in these decision-making and operational circles also prevents the formation of "role models" who can inspire other women. Such exclusion also acts in other ways, both self- and externally-imposed. For example, several female respondents from policy-making and security circles mentioned that "female complex" in a male-dominated society. By this they mean that due to issues of personal insecurity, there is intense competition among females in the domain. Combined with general negative attitudes of men, this leads to psychological pressure and creating hurdles through tactics such as character assassination, office politics etc. Therefore patriarchal attitudes – including their internalisation by women – lead to gendered barriers within institutions.

Similarly, these negative personal/dispositional attitudes combine with wider structural barriers to prevent security institutions from becoming women-friendly spaces. For example, women narrated handling and feeling the burden of multiple responsibilities: ranging from the household, to the extra burdens of patriotic and departmental "representation" on female workers. The pressures of housework also impinge on effective time-commitment to official duties. In fact, as several respondents narrated, female officers often actively avoid being involved in

1 Between 2014-2017, the number of police officers went from approximately 4400 to close to 6000 (DAWN Apr 2017; Peters and Chughtai, 2014 Foreign Policy). This is, however, still only 2% of the total police force.

field jobs and key decisions with regards to security policy and implementation. This is a combination of both internalised insecurity of female officers, patriarchal attitudes within institutions, and pressures on female workers from other spheres (such as family and household responsibilities).

Other institutional issues can also prevent effective female participation in the security domain. Flexibility in terms of maternity leave policy was highlighted by respondents. Similarly, one respondent pointed out that even a seemingly small addition such as having female-specific restrooms in police stations can make women feel welcome and relieve psychological pressure with regards to privacy and hygiene issues.

Crucially, respondents also pointed out the lack of women experts in the field of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). As one policy expert narrated, "we have experts in issues of women's rights and feminism in Pakistan, we have role model in other parts of the bureaucracy, but not in CVE and terrorism." Related to the above, there is a need to have more female experts trained in conducting CVE research and approaches in the field, and developing policy guidelines specific to the field.

Due to the paucity of such experts and some of the barriers recounted above, there is a critical lack of female "role models" within the state and security policy-making institutions. However, as demonstrated by the increasing number of women in the police and shifting attitudes of the state itself, there is an incipient recognition of the need for effective conflict amelioration and prevention. In this regard, respondents expressed the hope that once a "critical mass" of women experts and practitioners in the field of security is reached, this would also ease barriers of entry and accommodation for other aspiring women candidates. Having women-only quotas in security institutions and related policy-making bodies can also facilitate the process of reaching this level of "critical mass".

Respondents also identified a crucial lack of women-

> "That violent extremism in our society is also attributed to the lack of awareness among women and men about their rights and responsibilities. In our area, women accept violence and harassment at the hands of men because they think they must have done something wrong for which they have been subjected to non-acceptable behavior. Sensitization of women and men on gender roles is important, it will take time but it needs to be started."
>
> Shahi Begum
> A Lady Health Supervisor

> Our society has different rules for boys and girls. A boy can go outside his house at any time without asking permission. A girl has to ask if she can go, she has to tell the reason for going, where she is going, how she is going and what time will she come back. Even then she cannot go alone and in some cases not even allowed to go if her reason for going out is considered unimportant by men of the family.
>
> Shawkat Bibi
> A house maker from Swat

friendly public spaces in wider society. This in turn leads to a lack of public sociability among women and issues of mistrust and leg-pulling when it translated into higher, institutional spheres. Both active female politicians and those involved in security institutions recommended the institution of womens' community centers at local level.

These centers may serve two related purposes. At one level, they can provide an institutional and public space for women to meet and form bonds of sociability which can act to build mutual capacity and confidence. Moreover, they can also be a space for women from the community to have regular interaction with women involve in security institutions and policy-making. Both outcomes are aimed to increase mutual trust and self-confidence among women. Moreover, interaction of policy-makers with women can also open new avenues for developing and incorporating a gender-sensitive approach to security.

In summary, there is certainly a shift occurring at institutional and state levels with regards to the problem of conflict, violence, and extremism in Pakistan. Moreover, there is also an increasing representation of women in the domain of security policy-making and operationalising. The challenge here is to formulate and implement creative proposals which not only increase representation of women but can also incorporate gender-specific insights into policy and implementation of CVE and conflict prevention/amelioration.

For this, it is crucial to understand both the gendered effects of violent conflict and the gender-specific appeal of violent organisation. In addition, dispositional, institutional, and structural barriers to women's participation in security institutions and policy-making have to be actively addressed. In this, increasing effective participation of women in these domains, the training of female experts in areas of security policy-making and implementation, and stepping up social and gendered research on the appeal and effect of violent extremism must be prioritised.

Key lessons and opportunities:

- There are indications of a shift in state policy and wider societal attitudes in Pakistan towards reigning in and dealing with violent extremist groups. This has been manifested in various measures such as police and military operations, attempts to curb hate speech, and defang these groups' militancy through incorporation into mainstream politics.

- A gender-responsive approach to security and countering violent extremism is sorely lacking. This is manifested at various levels including compensation schemes for women victims of extremism, policy-making and implementation, and in institutional barriers to women's participation.

- While women are increasingly active in policy-making and the state bureaucracy, this is less so the case in the security sphere. Women face institutional barriers – ranging from negative attitudes to detrimental policies around leaves – to full participation in security institutions such as the police.

- There is also a lack of women experts in areas of social cohesion and violent extremism. Lack of women "role models" in key policy-making positions and in security institutions also discourages younger women who might potentially work in these areas. This compounds the lack of inclusion of female voices and gender-sensitive perspectives in security policy.

- Women-friendly public spaces in wider society (such as community centers) can help build trust among women, and among women and state officials. This can help in womens' greater interaction among themselves and gaining confidence for tackling public problems. Female members of state bureaucracy and police can also interact with community members more easily in these spaces, providing more opportunity for women role models to develop in these domains.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Legislators

1. Equality of all citizens is the cornerstone of social cohesion and harmony. From a state perspective, discrimination against citizens on the basis of sex, gender, religion, caste, creed etc creates power structures that perpetuate disharmony and conflict. In this regard, it is pertinent to amend the Constitution of Pakistan 1973[1] to reflect equality of all citizens before the law and Constitution and end the disenfranchisement meted out to minorities, especially women.

2. Autonomous Commissions serve as important human rights institutions to protect the rights of vulnerable groups. In this regard, legislative interventions for statutory Commissions, to protect the rights of religious/sectarian/ethnic minorities, at federal and provincial levels, are necessary to ensure that any incidents of conflicts are responded to by responsible and seasoned members of Commission. This would ensure that the conflict does not exacerbate into violent extremism.[2]

3. Political stakeholders can also promote social cohesion by aggravating criminal charges and punishments where elements of violent extremism are involved. Therefore, a differentiation in the Pakistan Penal Code between 'committing assault against a fellow citizen' and 'committing assault against a member of religious/sectarian/ethnic minority due to his or her identity' is necessary. The latter instance could include stricter punishment for the crime being motivated by or a manifestation of violent extremism. The same principle can be applied to the offence or murder in order to bypass provisions of qisas and diyat and making murder of a member of a minority an offence against the state rather than an offence against an individual. Similarly, acts of sexual and gender based violence, meted out against women and girls from minorities, should attract harsher punishments owing to their vulnerability and multiple discrimination faced by them.

> "We claim that education is increasing for girls but do girls have a choice what to study? After I finished my FSc, I wanted to study Science but one of my male cousins decided that I should not study Science anymore. I had to switch to arts and did my BA instead of BSc."
>
> Sidrah Akbar
> A student from Swat

1 Articles 41(2) and 91(3) stipulate that the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan can only be a Muslim. Political stakeholders, Parliamentarians and Members of Provincial Assemblies can start a dialogue and political advocacy to amend the Constitution of Pakistan in order to promote social cohesion, harmony and gender equality.

2 This recommendation was also highlighted by Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani in S.M.C. No. 1 of 2014 and others in relation to the suicide attack on church in Peshawar and other incidents of disharmony and conflicts. Furthermore, the Commissions should statutorily include adequate representation of women from religious minorities to put forward their needs and vulnerabilities.

4. Political participation of religious minorities, in particular women from religious minorities, remains another prominent issue impeding groups from affecting real social change. In this regard, the 'joint electorate' system for religious minorities does not represent their concerns. Even though religious minorities can participate in the general elections, the religious minorities 'selected' on reserved seats in the Legislatures are mere puppets of majority winning political parties and do not adequately address the issues of the communities they represent. Therefore, in order to increase political participation of women from religious minorities, it is pertinent for concerted political advocacy to amend Articles 51 and 106 of the Constitution to i) introduce a dual-vote casting system where the members of religious minorities would be allowed to vote members on reserved seats; ii) increase reserved seats for women from religious minorities to represent their issues on political platforms.

5. Forced conversions are one of the worst manifestations of violent extremism in form of gender-based violence. Political stakeholders can address the issue by advocating for a law to criminalise and regulate instances of forced conversions. Violations like forced conversions lie at the intersection of gender and disharmony, therefore, it is crucial to address such violations in order to mitigate the gendered ramifications of breakdown in social cohesion. While efforts made by the Sindh Assembly to criminalise and regulate forced conversions were rolled back, it is necessary for political stakeholders to keep the debate alive and move for legislative actions to protection women and girls from religious minorities when possible.

6. Increase in child marriage is a by-product of conflict and disharmony in communities most affected. Therefore, criminalising child marriage should be prioritised by political stakeholders to reduce such violations of the rights of the girl child and ensure that the bodily integrity, right to education, health and welfare of the girl child is protected.

7. Political advocacy at provincial level for affirmative actions for women in general and women from religious minorities (scheduled castes) in particular, in local government legislation can provide strategic avenues for issues of conflict or disharmony to be resolved at community level by all religious factions of community. Mediation powers given to local government institutions coupled with representation from religious minority community can assist in responding to conflict and tensions in a conciliatory manner, thereby, avoiding escalation into violent extremism.

8. Political advocacy to amend provincial textbook and curriculum board laws to include members from religious minorities communities, especially women, on their boards. Inclusion of women from religious minorities in the board for curriculum development will ensure both gender sensitisation as well as pluralism in the curriculum. Giving decision making powers to members of religious minority women will also lead to a curriculum which is reflective of the land's diversity and pluralism. Proactive role can also be played by religious minorities included in the curriculum board to document in school syllabus the contributions made by non-Muslim Pakistanis for the country.

9. Political advocacy to amend Election Act 2017, institutionalising affirmative action for women from religious minorities in political parties, can enhance meaningful political participation from religious minorities

communities to push their communities' agenda within party manifestos.

10. Sensitisation regarding violent extremism, its roots and manifestations, is important for all political stakeholders. Political stakeholders can bring meaningful change by passing resolutions in Assemblies acknowledging and appreciating contributions by religious minorities, women and other marginalised groups. Celebrating indigenous cultural traditions like Vaisakhi, Holi, Nowruz etc can promote social cohesion and harmony.

Policy Recommendations

1. Several findings above attest to the disenfranchisement of women, and women of minorities in particular. State officials are often not sensitized to women's oppression or to exercise of their agency, which can lead to underestimate and ignorance when it comes to dealing with gendered crimes such as sexual harassment and rape . The Study has revealed that sexual and other gender-based violence against women and girls in areas of conflict is largely unreported and invisible due to gendered notions of honour. Hence there is a need for gender sensitisation of state institutions to strengthen social contract between marginalized women and state functionaries like law enforcement agencies; thereby ensuring that the impact of disruption in social harmony on women and girls is reduced and mitigated.

2. The Federal Government can utilise the Ehsaas Programme to promote social cohesion in communities that they have suffered from disharmony and conflict by allocating resources towards families, communities and societies within Pakistan that are re-building themselves post-conflict. The gender conscious approach of Ehsaas Programme targeting women as beneficiaries can not only promote social cohesion through women's economic empowerment but also redress grievance of disenfranchised marginalised groups.

3. The religious Fatwas such as "Paigham e Pakistan"(the message of Pakistan) and "Dukhtaraan e Pakistan" (the daughters of Pakistan) serve as strong counter narrative to terrorist's ideologies of violence against women. These two documents effectively challenge the terrorist's narratives with respect to the rights and privileges of women under Islam, constitution and the cultural values of Pakistan. These narratives need to be promoted by the Federal and Provincial Governments, civil society organisations and parliamentarians as they grant the women of Pakistan their rightful share in the society. The references to the rights of minorities and marginalised communities in Paigham-e-Pakistan should be made part of the national curriculum including madaris so that these values as espoused by Islam are deeply ingrained in the psyche of the nation as true Islamic values.

4. The national security and internal security conceptual framework must include gender empowerment as a critical theme and focus area so that the violence against women is neither legitimized nor accepted as a norm by the extremists and terrorist organisations. The absence of state policies that accommodate women as partner in development and security gives license to extremists to impose their world view and define the status of women in Pakistan. The concept of human security and national security are incomplete without participation of women as active members of the society. There is a need for study on gender dimensions in National Security policies and counter terrorism action plan including CVE initiatives in the country

so that appropriate interventions are made for gender mainstreaming.

5. Accountability measures can be institutionalized to pre-empt any disruptions in community harmony in order to protect women and girls. For example, human rights bodies like the Inter-Faith Councils being established at provincial and district levels in Punjab by the government can be engaged to resolve any conflicts between religious minorities before these conflicts exacerbate into incidents of violence. Engagement of existing governmental support structures with necessary gender and peace perspectives can create accountability mechanisms at district and provincial levels to pre-empt any conflicts before they manifest into incidents of violent extremism.

6. A robust accountability mechanism against hate speech targeting marginalized and vulnerable groups should be ensured by the government to effectively reduce and prevent incidents of violent extremism. The accountability mechanism should adopt a preventive approach by prosecuting hate speech and speeches inciting violence before such speeches result in violence. There is great danger here of surveillance mechanisms being used to target vulnerable groups such as women and/or curb basic freedoms (such as of speech and association). There needs to be greater research (especially in the Pakistani context) on how gender-inclusive cybersecurity measures may be developed which can tackle hate speech issues, without impinging on basic freedoms and on the rights of already vulnerable groups such as women and minorities.

7. Representation and participation of women is necessary in all support structures, committees, councils etc. established by the government to promote peace and pluralism. Particularly, women belonging from marginalized groups like religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities, should be given representation on governmental bodies promoting peace and pluralism. Women's voices are essential for any peace related interventions to highlight the disproportionate impact of disharmony on women and girls and what steps can be taken to mitigate that impact.

8. Reform and regulation of curriculum in formal and informal educational settings to transform deeply engrained mind-sets and attitudes justifying violent extremism in the name of religion, ethnicity, nationalism etc. As women and girls are disproportionately impacted by violent extremism, it is pertinent to induct them as change-makers in the process to not only transform narratives but also infuse gender perspectives in security-related matters.

9. Support capacity building of media and entertainment industries to promote messages of equality, diversity, religious harmony and inclusivity to highlight pluralism and challenge 'hegemonic narratives' about citizens in general and women in particular as an alternative discourse to radicalization.

10. Government functionaries should make a conscious effort to implement all women-related legislation to promote gender equality and close gender gaps. Reduced gender parities can serve to decrease the incidents of gender based violence (forced conversions, child marriages etc) birthing from violent extremism.

11. Social cohesion can also be promoted by the federal and provincial governments by protecting religious and spiritual sites of religious minorities. Furthermore, gestures like announcing government holidays on

major events of religious minorities can go a long way in giving a message of social cohesion and harmony. The governments should also undertake to provide security for celebrations of religious minorities.

12. Use affirmative action to ensure gender balance in all State Institutions (Executive, Judiciary and legislation)[3]

    - A greater focus on changing perceptions of women's role in the security domain at societal, community and family level to encourage more women joining security related fields. Greater conscription of women in security related fields results in a state functionary becoming more responsive to the needs and issues of women.

    - Infrastructure needs for women in security related fields should be addressed to create a conducive environment for working women. Government offices and police stations need to be equipped and provided with adequate infrastructure for proper functioning of working women, for example: separate washrooms, staff room or rest room, day care for children etc.

    - Flexible working arrangements should be encouraged for women in security-related fields. During the course of the research, it was observed that there was no regular system of work time table where some duty timings extended to 16-18 hours. This demotivates women from joining security-related fields therefore a flexible working arrangement with fixed time table would be beneficial to encourage women joining such area of work.

    - Deductions in allowance during maternity leaves also negatively impacts women working in security related work. According to the Study's findings, women police are entitled to 90 days of maternity leaves. However, a total of ten thousand rupees are deducted in case of maternity leaves as pick and drop allowance. This deduction negatively effects their monthly domestic expenditures.

    - National Police Bureau (NPB) should devise a National Gender Strategy for Police and coordinate effective implementation of the gender strategy through advocacy with provincial Inspector Generals of Police. NBP should constitute an implementation committee with due representation from provincial police forces to facilitate implementation of gender responsive plans of action at provincial levels.

    - Provincial Home Departments should review and standardise recruitment requirements, create more sanctioned posts for women, conduct awareness-raising, outreach and support to women to encourage them to apply and take measures to tackle the dominant male culture to make it a more comfortable and accepting environment for women officers in police force.

    - Special measures should be taken to ensure women are not confined to gender-based policing roles and are given adequate training, support and experience to be mainstreamed throughout the police and also recommends addressing the training issues identified to ensure women officers have the necessary skills, experience and confidence to progress.

3 Due to the orientation of our research we focusing mainly on Police and LEAs.

- Proper medical facilities should be available to both police men and police women. Currently, there is inadequate health insurance/dispensary or first aid treatment equipment in police stations for staff.

Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations

1. Economic resilience and empowerment initiatives can reduce existing gender disparities in communities as per the findings of the Study. Reduced gender disparities and enhanced agency of women can result in greater protection for women and girls during any disruptions in harmony. Economic resilience and empowerment initiatives can give women the necessary voice in decision making at household level which in turn allows women's concerns about safety and protection during disharmony to be addressed and measures to be taken to protect women and girls from violence.

2. Pre-existing gender disparities can also be reduced through a proactive role of the national and provincial CSOs regarding the rights of women and girls. Advocacy and campaign debunking patriarchal thought processes and enhancing the rights of women and girls can mitigate impact of disruption in social cohesion on women and girls. However, caution must be exercised to not strengthen any patriarchal notions that result in violence against women and girls in contexts of conflicts in the first place. For example: campaigns along the lines that 'women are our mothers, sisters, daughters etc' reinforce notions of women belonging to men which in turn results in high incidence of violence in order to 'dishonour' families and communities.

3. A gendered approach to civic education for communities is vital to strengthen not only social contract between women and the state but also increase political participation of women in state matters. Political empowerment of women at community level instills greater focus on women and girls rights and generates democratic accountability by women as a 'constituency' of their elected leaders; thereby bringing forth women's issues and susceptibility in incidents of disharmony and accountability of elected leaders in preventing and prosecuting perpetrators of violence.

4. Capacity building for civil society organisations on peace building should be gender focused in order to ensure that peacebuilding initiatives are not only promoting peace but also reducing gender disparities. Alternative discourses advocated and campaigned to counter violent extremist narratives should be gender sensitive. For example, promoting indigenous Pashtunwali/ethnic precepts in a peacebuilding initiative runs the risk of condoning traditional practices of violence against women, like deprivation from inheritance. Therefore, capacity building for CSOs along gender lines is necessary to complement other initiatives to reduce violence against women and girls.

5. Organisation and mobilization of women networks at community levels to demand their basic rights and hold duty bearers accountable. Strengthening social contract between women and the state is a necessary ingredient to counter violent extremism and close gender gaps. Decrease in gender disparities will result in decrease in gender based violence in contexts of conflicts and violent extremism.

6. Reviving women friendly indigenous practices

across Pakistan to promote diversity, inclusivity and pluralism for women and marginalized groups in Pakistan. Promoting women's voices and giving visibility to women garbed in cultural tones is essential to challenging extremist narratives that negatively impact women and girls.

Programme Development Recommendations

1. Intersectionality is important to inform activities linked to social cohesion. Breakdown in social cohesion impacts women, girls, boys, transgender persons and members from religious minorities differently. The pre-existing gender inequalities and power relations are huge determinants with regards to the violence manifested upon breakdown in social cohesion. Therefore, interventions related to gender equality and VAWG, even without any focus on conflict, are important to reduce gender disparities and mitigate the extreme forms of violence resulting from community disharmony.

2. Multiple identities of beneficiaries, especially with regards to women, girls and transgender persons from minority communities, are important to strategize for during project implementation. In line with the 'Do No Harm Principle', all activities designed need to be implemented in a manner to ensure that the safety of women, girls and project staff are not jeopardised in any manner. In this regard, it is essential to conduct a gender analysis documenting gender relations, access and control over resources, laws, support structures etc in the proposed geographical area of intervention to devise informed programme strategies in line with the 'Do No Harm Principle'.

3. Women change makers with a view to promoting community harmony and social cohesion need to be identified for long term impact and change. The women change makers identified can serve as strategic points of contact for project implementation in select districts. Women change makers with leadership roles within their communities can bring the necessary community perspective to project implementation and devise advocacy, keeping in mind the cultural, ethnic, religious, sectarian etc sensitivities. For example, power structures within the family could also be a good starting to promote women leadership and social cohesion within families. Grandmothers and older women within families have more power as compared to young women and girls. Older women can also be targeted to transform attitudes and behaviour and pave the way for young women and girls to take up leadership roles.

4. Building upon the previous point, it is imperative to acknowledge male family members and male supporters within the family. Generally, most of initiatives focusing on inequality and discrimination against women have been fixated on men as perpetrators of discrimination and subordination of women. Attaining gender equality should be recognised as a societal responsibility and fully engage men as partners in achieving the goal. This will also have an added advantage of bridging the trust between women and parents (as discussed on page 9).

5. There is a need to develop networks of male allies who have come out in support for gender equality and against male violence against women. Moreover, these men have actively challenged existing stereotypes and men's roles in perpetuating regressive sexual relationships. Taking these male allies onboard, advocacy campaigns and programmes emphasizing the need for men

to change their attitudes and behaviours to order to improve the situation of women should be developing, highlighting the positive role of men as partners and allies in building a more gender equal and responsive society.

6. Mapping of human rights related support structures and mechanisms across Pakistan to identify strategic entry points to promote social cohesion and women's leadership. Post devolution, each province has its own set of committees and support structures in relation to human rights, rights of religious minorities, rights of women, inter-faith harmony etc. A mapping of the existing structures with an analysis of their terms of reference or statutory mandate can be a good starting point to identify relevant governmental structures that can be utilised for maximum outreach till grass root level. Linkages with relevant governmental structures can be established through capacity building incentives and consultative meetings for not only greater outreach in social cohesion initiatives but also strengthening public-private partnership.

7. Capacity building of state institutions with mediation powers, like Village Councils, Neighbourhood Councils, Dispute Resolution Councils etc, can serve an important function of mitigating community incidents that can exacerbate into violence. Capacity building of community leaders and state institutions who are the first point of contact or first responders to incidents can also transform power structures to make these structures more responsive to values of harmony and cohesion.

8. Various existing CSO platforms working directly on women's leadership or social cohesion can be harnessed for project implementation. In order to ensure efficient allocation of resources and time, it is pertinent to synergise project implementation efforts with existing initiatives and platforms. Creating synergies would therefore not only generate greater community ownership but also result in sustainability in relation to the critical mass of change makers capacitated in the process.

9. Campaigns and advocacy for the programme should be rooted in local indigenous schools of thought and enlightened religious interpretations in respect of social cohesion and women's leadership. Each province of Pakistan has a history of Sufism promoting phrases that negate toxic masculinity and male power and are messages that resonate with the general masses. Therefore, campaigns and advocacy should be developed after thorough research on progressive religious interpretations and Sufi thoughts with a gender lens to effectively promote social cohesion and women's leadership.

10. A mechanism for the program to track shifts in power structures is essential to integrate an Early Warning System. Shifts in power relations and social hierarchy are important indicators leading to community disharmony, however, it is important to note the shift in power relations is patriarchal at both ends. According to the Study, tools and form of patriarchy change in light of the altering power relations, for example, from Maliks and Khans to Maulvis in case of tribal areas.

11. Identity politics and the role of multiple identities impacting the lives of women has been another important finding of this Study. In this regard, it is important to devise project strategies keeping in mind the ethnic and linguistic identities of the beneficiaries and what messages would be responsive to the targeted beneficiaries in question.

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Annex A: Major Research Questions

The major research questions which emerge from the above are as follows:

9. What are the resources (assets, capital, land, technology etc.) and capacities (skills, education, social prestige etc.) which are determinant of hierarchy and social structure in a particular community?(and where women lie in this)

10. How have different types and degrees of intense conflicts created ruptures in social structures (such as sectarian conflict in Quetta and civil war/fundamentalist violence in Pashtun areas)?

11. How has the distribution of resources and capacities (identified in Q1) changed over the duration of the conflict? Have the criteria for leadership and hierarchy – the resources and capacities required therein – changed over this duration?

12. How have women been affected by these conflicts? Have conflicts created openings for assertion of women's leadership or have they further entrenched patriarchal marginalization of women?

13. What histories, discourses, resources, and capacities (as identified in Q1 and Q3) have been mobilized in these varied responses by women? For example, have the discourses been mobilized that of essentialist women's "positions"/ "capacities", or those of universalist-normative discourses of women's equality?

14. If there has been an assertion on the side of conflict or peace, what groups of women have been most prominent? That is, women from which age groups, class(es), professions/ educational backgrounds, and/or ethnicity have been most prominent? And why?

15. Leading on from Q5 and Q6 above, how have women's responses to conflict been different to those of men (if at all)?

16. What do the mobilization of particular discourses and forms of assertion tell us about deploying gendered lens towards the study of conflict and peace? Do gender-targeted initiatives add substantially to peace-making and social cohesion?

Research Methods/Protocols

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods will be followed for this research. Examples of some of these are given below:

Key Informant Interviews with security experts, academics, and activists, especially those with a focus on conflict and gender. These will focus on elaborating pre- and post-conflict dynamics, mobilization of resources and capacities.

Surveys among community leaders to identify the capacities and resources which help to determine hierarchy and/or confer leadership within the community. Surveys among newly emergent women community leaders can also elucidate different age, class, educational, and/or ethnic-community backgrounds, and the resources and capacities, which became mobilized during and post-conflict.

Focus groups discussions and life histories/case studies will give details about changing social structures and participants – especially women's – responses to conflict and peace-building measures.

Description of Approach

The proposed project aims to produce a knowledge

product on "Resilience, Community Security, and Social Cohesion through Effective Women's Leadership". This will be developed by identifying knowledge gaps in the current research available in relation to this topic. Further research will then be conducted, in the form of both primary data collection and secondary research, to enrich and add to the knowledge database on this topic. The proposed project focuses on the following aspects:

- Identifying knowledge gaps regarding community security and social cohesion
- Factors undermining community security and social cohesion and its effects on women's voices and representation
- Vulnerabilities of women and gendered drivers that may contribute to security threats and fragmentations of social cohesion which increase the impact of violence and security threats to them
- Contexts and factors which may cause deep rooted ideologies and mobilization of women and young women, and the roles of women/ young women in preventing and contributing towards violence
- Development of a knowledge product with the aim of advocacy and raising awareness on the role of women and girls in strengthening community resilience

Our focus in this study will essentially be on women and the social, economic and political system in which they are embedded. Theoretically, this can be understood as the classic structure-agency dichotomy where women may exercise agency but are also constrained by the structural impediments. The structural realities such as patriarchy, prevalence of extremist ideologies, political violence, lack of economic opportunities etc. affect women in a variety of way. It is important to understand their unique vulnerability to extremist ideas and the peculiar impacts extremism has on women. At the same time, it is also important to understand how women can exercise their agency to resist extremism and what are the capacities that they need in order to do this. This study aims to understand the structural realities that shape women's worldview and behaviour as well as the factors that may help them deal with intense extremism. It is the nuanced understanding of the various factors that determine the interplay between this structure-agency duality that may lead to policy recommendations aimed at reshaping social realities.

Detailed Methodology

The research has used a mixed methods approach to gather information and data for the development of the knowledge product. The team has carried out both qualitative and quantitative research that has consisted of collecting/synthesizing both primary and secondary data. The primary tools that have been used for this research have included in-person surveys and interviews. In addition, the team has also reviewed some of the existing literature and tools. The methodology of the project has been laid out below.

In-depth Literature Review and Analysis

Firstly, an in-depth, thorough and desk-based literature review was conducted. The purpose of this was to collate research and information that is currently available on the topics of resilience, community security, social cohesion and women leadership. This enabled further analysis with regards to identify gaps in available knowledge in relation to these topic areas.

Identification of Key Experts, Discussants and Stakeholders

After the identification of knowledge gaps, criteria could be set out for the identification of key experts, discussants and stakeholders to aid in the collation of primary data. The organization proposed a team of consultants which consisted of a range of experts, to ensure the best possible input for the research report and knowledge database. The strong and established

networks and links and other key personnel of the organization helped in identifying experts, discussants and stakeholders for primary data collection.

The list of key stakeholders that were reached out to included (but not limited to):

1. Members of Law Enforcement Agencies, retired IGPs.
2. Federal and Provincial Home Departments.
3. Ministry of Interior
4. Members of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies
5. National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA)
6. National Security Division
7. Academics and Members of Think Tanks
8. Members of relevant UN agencies (UNODC, IOM, UNDP, UNWOMEN)
9. Relevant Senate and Parliamentary Committees on Interior, Law and Justice
10. NGOs focusing on gender issues.
11. Security and Rule of Law experts

Key personnel were identified in all provinces to help build a national picture. An initial list (not exhaustive) was identified by the research team consisting of experts previously engaged by the institute.[1]

Primary Data Collection

The next stage was the collection of primary data. The project used a mixed-methodology approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data and develop the knowledge product. Research instruments, including questionnaires and surveys, were developed accordingly to collect information and data using the methods outlined. Tools included:

a) **In-person Surveys**: A survey was designed and implemented to obtain evidence on the identified indicators. Resources including surveys previously implemented in similar developing, rural, communities were used as reference materials. A questionnaire was designed to measure the impact being created in the community.

b) **Key Informant Interviews:** Interviews have been conducted with key informants and members of civil society in order to develop clear understanding of deep-rooted community and institutional issues. The research team developed interview guides for these catering for all the sensitivities of this subject.

c) **Focus Groups**: Focus groups were conducted in the provincial capitals of all provinces, i.e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh, and the Federal Capital Territory. These were focused on and designed for women. The aim of these groups was to gather the unique perspectives and experiences of women at the local level regarding community security, social cohesion and women leadership within their communities. The research team developed focus group guidelines to ensure **do's and don'ts** for these sessions.

d) **Case Studies & Other Secondary Research**: Case studies have been developed to capture human stories and examples which signify how the women leadership has improved social cohesion in local communities.

Sampling Plan for UN Women Study in Pakistan

Universe

The universe for the study was adult women residing in five major cities of Pakistan:

1 See detailed list in Appendix A

- Karachi
- Lahore
- Islamabad
- Peshawar
- Quetta

Sampling Methodology

Gallup Pakistan had proposed to use **Stratified Random Sampling** with "Booster Approach" for the study. The methodology is consistent with scientific principles of Statistical Sample Selection used worldwide.

What is the Stratification Approach?

Stratified sampling is a probability sampling method and a form of random sampling in which the population is divided into two or more groups (strata) according to one or more common attributes. Stratified random sampling intends to guarantee that the sample represents specific sub-groups or strata. Accordingly, application of stratified sampling method involves dividing population into different subgroups (strata) and selecting subjects from each stratum in a proportionate manner.

In this study, we used cities as single strata i.e. cities for stratification.

Measure of Size

The sample selection was done in two stages.

First Stage: Sample selection was done using Probability Proportionate to Size method in which Measure of Size (MOS) was the population of the strata itself.

Probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling is a method of sampling from a finite population in which a size measure is available for each population unit before sampling and where the probability of selecting a unit is proportional to its size.

City	Population as per Census 2017	%	Sample Distribution
Islamabad	1,014,825	3%	17
Lahore	11,126,285	37%	185
Karachi	14,910,352	50%	248
Peshawar	1,970,042	7%	33
Quetta	1,001,205	3%	17
Total	30,022,709	100%	500

Second Stage: As can be seen from the above table, if we distribute the sample according to population, the sample size allocated to Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar is less than 100. According to science of statistics and probability, sample sizes below N 100 generally have non – normal distribution, which means that the statistical validity of the sample cannot be determined. In order to correct this approach, the statistical science recommends the approach of using Booster Sampling. Therefore, we had applied this approach whereby all five cities had at least n 100 sample.

The table below shows the shows the original sample distribution, revised sample and achieved sample:

City	Population	%	Sample Distribution	Revised Sample	Achieved Sample
Islamabad	1,014,825	3%	17	100	101
Lahore	11,126,285	37%	185	185	190
Karachi	14,910,352	50%	248	248	252
Peshawar	1,970,042	7%	33	100	100
Quetta	1,001,205	3%	17	100	103
Total	30,022,709	100%	500	734	746

Ensure Representation in the Sample

In order to ensure that the final sample is representative of the five cities we would use RIM Weighting to correct the final arrived figures. RIM weighting is a complex statistical method through which representation of sample is ensured and it is used across the world. Random Iterative Method (RIM) Weighting allows researchers to adjust multiple characteristics within a dataset while keeping the characteristics proportionate as a whole.

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 746)

Average Age of Respondent	
34 Years	
Province	
Punjab	39%
KP	13%
Sindh	34%
Balochistan	14%
Marital Status	
Single	15%
Married	82%
Divorced	1%
Others	2%
Education	
No Education	34%
Less than Primary (Grade V)	10%
High School (Grade V to IX)	20%
Matric	16%
Intermediate	10%
Graduate	7%
Postgraduate	3%
Ethnicity	
Punjabi	37%
Pashtun	21%
Urdu-speaking	17%
Sindhi	10%
Balochi	7%
Other	8%
Religion	
Islam	97%
Christianity	3%
Hinduism	1%

Annex B:

Sr/no	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Dr. Fareeha Paracha	Director	Sabawoon
2	Khawar Mumtaz	Practitioner	NCSW
3	Gulmina Bilal	Director	Individual Land
4	Peter Jacob	Director	Centre of Social Science Research
5	Dr Maria Sultan		
6	Mosarrat Qadeem	Director	Paiman
7	Maliha Hussain	Director	Mehergarh
8	Fauzia Saeed	Director	Mehergarh
9	Kishwar Sultana		Insaan Foundation
10	Fozia Vaqar	Practitioners	
11	Samar Bilour	MPA	ANP
12	Shandana Gulzar Khan	Politicians	
13	Shandana Saad	Politicians	
14	Senator Khrishna lal Kohli	Politicians	
15	Humaira Mufti	Bureaucrats	MOI
16	Farah Hamid	Bureaucrats	
17	Amna Baig	Police	
18	Rafia Baig	Bomb Disposal team	
19	Ihsan Ghani	Bureaucrats	
20	Dr Farhan Zahid	Bureaucrats	
21	Shahzada Sultan	Bureaucrats	
22	Dr Haider Ali Khan	Bureaucrats	
23	Sadia Bukhari	Academic	NUST
24	Sabiha Shaheen	Practitioners	Bargad
25	Nasreen Naso	Practitioners	
26	Fatima Nangyal	Social worker	

27	Jalila Haider	Social worker	
28	Fatima Atif	Social worker	
29	Abdul Basit	CVE Expert	
30	Helena Saeed	AIG	
31	Sumera Aza	SP	
32	Amir Rana	Bureaucrats	PIPS
33	Ammara Durrani	Consultant	
36	Farzana Bari	Gender expert	
37	Dr Asma	Academic	NDU
38	Nazish Brohi	Consultant	
39	Sadaf Khan		
40	Ali Babakel	Bureaucrat	
41	Rahimullah Yosufzai	Journalist	The News
42	Rafiullah Kakar	Academic	
43	Azaz Syed	Journalist	GEO
44	Humaira Sheikh	Director	Shiratgah
45	Rania Tamkeen Zaidi	Social worker	
46	Anbreen Ajaib	Director	Badari
47	Shakila Firdos	Social worker	
48	Hamal Baloch	Teacher	

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