ACCEPTANCE OF WIFE-BEATING IN PAKISTAN: A BEHAVIORAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The evidence regarding the acceptance of Intimate partner violence among women in different societies is mixed and sometimes scant. The hypothesis that female decision making role is negatively associated with the acceptance of such attitudes is tested by using 2012-2013 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey. The study results are indicative of the fact that despite large number of women exercising no role in decision making, whatsoever, the acceptance of wife beating in Pakistan is significantly lower than what is reported in other studies of the Muslim countries. In other words, women with less decision making power do not significantly differ in their perception towards wife beating when compared with women who have decision making power. However, the study results show that education and socioeconomic status are the two factors that impact behavior towards wife beating justification significantly. Wife beating justification consistently declines with increased educational and socioeconomic status.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender norms in Pakistan encourage female subjugation and justify violence against women. As a consequence of the patriarchal nature of Pakistani society, where men behaving violently towards women is the status quo – an abused state is the "normal" state for women. The Ansar Burney Trust estimates that around 70 percent of Pakistani women experience some form of domestic violence in their lives (Shaikh, 2000). Some of the most shocking expressions of violence against women include acid attacks, honor killings, immolation and rape. The abuse these women face is both physical and psychological – and they are subjected to it by their own families, husbands and in-laws. Acts of domestic violence largely go unpunished since whatever happens at home is considered a personal matter, free of all legal consequences. According to the Demographic Health Survey of Pakistan (2012-2013), 40% of the women aged 15-49 have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). Human Rights watch, in one of their more detailed reports, found that up violence against women in Pakistan still remains to be very high (HRW report, 2018). According to a survey cited by Ali and Gavino (2008), which was conducted on 1,000 women in Punjab, 35 percent of the women admitted in hospitals reported being beaten by their husbands. The survey reported that at least two women, on average, were burned every day in domestic violence incidents (Ali & Gavino, 2008). The Ansar Burney Trust estimates that a woman suffers an acid attack, on average, every week in Pakistan. Due to the patriarchal set-up of homes, victims silently accept such behavior. Their passivity exacerbates the problem. The prevalence of domestic violence can also be attributed, in part, to the victims' unawareness of their rights, their lack of financial means to go for legal action, and even often a lack of confidence in the law enforcement system of the country. However, the most notable cause is the existing socio-cultural norms that use religion as a pretext to subjugate women. The validation from religious groups has led to a widespread belief that man has the right to correct female behavior even if it requires physically punitive measures such as beating. A direct relationship exists between tolerating violence against women and the actual occurrence of violence against women (Khawaja et al., 2008). This paper focuses on the attitude of married women in Pakistan towards wife beating. It investigates the link between female empowerment and their tolerance towards such attitudes.

Literature Review

Intimate partner violence is a serious health concern (Campbell, 2002; Dunkle et al., 2004; Klostermann, 2006). It often results in negative physical and mental health outcomes and exerts a lifelong undesirable impact on not only the victim but also on subsequent generations (Khawaja and Al-Nsour 2010). Wife beating is one of the most prevalent form of intimate partner violence and the ratio and justifications for its acceptances varies among different societies, both developed and developing (Counts & Brown, 1992; Jejeebhoy, 1998; Rao, 1997). The prevalence of ever having been beaten ranges from 15% to 71%, with most countries falling between 29% and 62% (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). The perpetuation of this behavior is partially explained by the outlook of women towards wife beating and the presence of structural obstacles that prevent women from gaining access to support (Khawaja & Al-Nsour 2010). Studies have found that acceptance of wife beating in a society, irrespective of gender, is high in many developing countries (Hindin, 2003; Koenig et al., 2003; Rani, Bonu, & Diop-Sidibe, 2004).

Interestingly, few studies report a very high acceptance of wife battery among women compared to those reporting among men (Koenig et al., 2003; Rani et al., 2004). In addition, strong empirical evidence also exists for the fact that women who accept wife beating may be at greater risk for continuous abuse and beating by their husbands than those who reject this behavior (Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988). Furthermore, other researches reveal that acceptance of wife beating is directly proportional to the women herself having been subjected to such abuse. Victims of wife beating are seen to be more likely to accept and justify this phenomenon. However, the evidence of correlation and direction of causality is unclear. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2006), Daher et al. (2010). Bringing about a change would require greater understanding of the causes and the reasons for its acceptance and changing social norms regarding acceptance of violence to prevent and eventually do away with such behavior.

There is a significant lack of research regarding the acceptance of wife beating and related violent behavior particularly from developing countries. Studies have been conducted in developed countries however with a more mature society, empowered women and commitment to human rights the people there are much less accepting of such behavior. Evidence however exists that this phenomenon is prevalent and accepted to a large extent in developing countries particularly

South East Asia, Africa and Middle East. A research on intimate partner violence (IPV) highlights that in North Africa and Middle East intimate partner violence ranges between 9 percent to 52 percent. The tolerance of such conduct is quite high in countries of this region with 86 percent women in Egypt, 61 percent in Jordan and 40 percent women in Turkey validate this behavior (Boy & Kulczycki, 2008; Khawaja et al., 2008; Khawaja & Al-Nsour, 2010).

The research by Hindin (2003) highlights the prevalence and causes of wife beating in Zimbabwe. Violence against women is common because women have lower status and lack power within the family. They do not have access to legal help and there are no laws to impose penalties for domestic abuse. Furthermore, more than 50 percent of the Zimbabwean women according to this research seem to believe that wife beating is justified depending upon the circumstances. The attitude of the women towards wife beating depends on the level of education, socio demographic characteristics the duration of the marriage are all factors that influence their thinking and attitude. Better educated women in well paid jobs are least likely to justify wife beating but are often unable to change the mentality and social norms that that establish the dominance of the man in the marriage (Hindin, 2003). Research by Alam et al. (2018) also highlights that a considerable number of people including both men and women justify wife beating under several circumstances. It is considered the right of the husband to beat the wife to stop her from incorrect behavior according to the husband's standards. The causes include factors like adultery disrespect of husband and lack of reverence for his relatives. This kind of attitude and the resulting phenomenon of wife beating is a result of preconceived notions attitudes and beliefs that define and ingrain gender roles. Women have also internalized and accepted these gender roles to such an extent that they are often seen to justify wife beating more than men. This evil phenomenon can be controlled or reduced by reducing the justification for this practice. The justification can be reduced by encouraging women participation in household decision making (Alam et al., 2018). This research also identifies that apart from female participation in household decision making, the justification for wife beating can be reduced by preventing underage marriages, improving education and socio economic status. Women with higher education and from better socio economic back grounds and increasing the marriage age and introducing laws to implement that age can reduce the justification of wife beating.

Women participation in household decision making refers to aspects such as

children's education, health marriage decisions, use of male/female contraceptive and decisions with regard to visiting of relatives. Research by Dhaher et al. 2010 has found that women who are decision makers in three or more areas of daily family life are less likely to justify wife beating. Dhaher et al. (2010) on wife beating attitudes in Palestine find significant differences in attitudes in different regions of the country. In the Hebron region women were disadvantaged with respect to their education and employment but had significant control over household decision making were not likely to justify wife beating. This reveals the significance of female participation in household decision making and the importance of working on building women empowerment.

Owing to these evidences, assessment of the acceptance of wife beating in a society is an essential part of a women empowerment and gender discrimination policy making. Currently the global debate over these two areas and media highlight of issues related to violence against women by their partners has further reinforced the need for an informed policy making over issues related to IPV. Unfortunately, in Pakistan this area like many other socio cultural hotspots has largely been victim of rhetoric, ill-informed debate, and anecdotal evidence (Shaikh, 2000; Gavino, 2008).

Various studies in Pakistan show that women do not enjoy equal opportunities in making any decision not even in decisions regarding their marriage or any other decision related to them (Shaikh, 2000). Low empowerment and women's reduced autonomy is considered a contributing factor for domestic violence in Pakistan and studies show that lower socioeconomic status, females' low education levels and lack of opportunities are core factors for low empowerment (Sathar, 2007).

Last two decades in Pakistan have seen significant social and political changes that have brought about consequent behavioral changes. With improving literacy rates of women, consistent media highlight of this issue, better social connectivity and increasing socio economic and political role of women in Pakistan in the last two decades, it is understandable that women's attitudes towards acceptance of violence should have been more inclined towards lesser acceptance of such violent acts (Ali et al., 2008). However, the evidence to such a behavioral shift, as far as Pakistani society is concerned, is mixed and scant (Qaisrani, 2016).

Based on the literature review above it is believed wife's role in decision making is considered a positive factor that contributes to women empowerment and better understanding of their domestic rights which may contribute to their

overall non acceptance of domestic violence. The main hypothesis being tested in this paper are 1) women who have no role in decision making at home are likely to justify wife beating more than those having some role, 2) women's acceptance for wife beating is negatively associated with her level of education and 3) women with lower socio economic status are more likely to believe that wife beating is justified.

The findings of this paper are supposed to make significant contributions in informing policy decisions and interventions aimed at empowering women and curbing violence against them.

METHODOLOGY

Data and Sampling

The data for the study comes from Pakistan Demographic and health survey, PDHS 2012 – 2013, which is the third nationally representative demographic and health survey officially, reported so far. The survey "Provides reliable estimates of fertility and family planning, maternal and child health, women's and children's nutritional status, women's empowerment, domestic violence, and knowledge of HIV/AIDS that can be used by program managers and policymakers to evaluate and improve existing programs".

It is a two stage stratified sampling survey in which around 13464 households from 248 urban and 252 rural clusters were selected for interview. All ever married women of the age between 15 – 49 years and all ever married men of the same age group were interviewed in the selected households thus making the survey nationally representative of the target population. The methodology of sample selection survey design and data collection is explained in the report of demographic and health survey for Pakistan (NIPS [Pakistan] & ICF, 2019)

From the eligible number of women (14,569) for the survey, 13,558 women were interviewed with a response rate of around 93% which makes the actual sample size of our study. The survey questionnaires contains questions about basic biographic and anthropomorphic details as well as questions about reproductive and child health, family planning and disease history and socio-economic status. Explicit questions about women's socioeconomic role in the family and their response towards domestic violence are also part of the survey: This study makes use of the data regarding this behavioural and social response of women towards

domestic violence correlating it with other biographic, social and economic indicators in the data.

Model & Variables

This paper sets out to explore, in Pakistan's context, the link between women acceptance of wife beating with their role in the household decision making and other demographic factors. This is done by making use of a simple regression model having women's response towards acceptance of wife beating as our dependent variable. The data for the dependent variable comes from the self-reported responses of women in the sample. We regress our dependent variable with women's role in decision making, which is also a self - reported variable. Simply we regress,

$$\text{WBEAT}_{\text{acceptance}} = \beta_1 \text{DECROL} + \beta_2 X + e \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \quad (1)$$

The outcome variable (WBEATacceptance) is self - reported acceptance by the respondent women of wife's beating, reported under five different circumstances. The respondent is asked whether she justify or not wife beating if a) wife goes out without telling her husband b) neglects the children c) argues with husband d) refuses to have intercourse and e) burns the food.   All five circumstances are, therefore, combined to generate a binary variable for justification of wife beating with "1" if beating is considered justified in any of the five circumstances and 0 otherwise. The internal consistency among the five variables (i.e., five circumstances) is .77 (Cronbach's α = .77). With this level of internal consistency it can be safely assumed that all the five circumstances with a binary response measure the same phenomenon.

Our main predictor variable (DECROL) is the women's role in decision making , a categorical variable in the survey coded for self-reported   responses ranging from women's independent role in household decision making to no role at all (for categories description refer questionnaire PDHS 2012-2013). Respondents were questioned about who makes decision in five different circumstances: a) about own health care b) major household purchases c) visit to family or relative and d) child health. The responses "respondent alone" and "husband and respondent together" are considered as respondent women's "role in household decision making" while other responses were considered as respondent having no role in household decision making (Md. Ismael et al, 2018). The predictor

variable is therefore converted into a binary variable with "1" for women's role in household decision making and "0" for otherwise. All four circumstances are grouped together to generate a single binary predictor variable where a woman's role in decision making in any of the four circumstances is considered as a role in decision making. The internal consistency among the four variables (i.e., four circumstances) is 0.82 (Cronbach's α = .82).

The explanatory variable X is a vector of all other variables included in the model due to their association and relation either with the subject of the outcome variable or the predictor variable (Ismael et al, 2018; Fariyal, 2005). These variables include demographic features of the respondent women mainly age of the respondent, urban or rural dwelling, education of the respondent and husband, region and socioeconomic status .Pearson chi square test was used for selection of variables in the multivariate model which is finally estimated through logit regression.

Model Estimation

To estimate the above mentioned model having binary dependent variable through Logit regression we use the following standard definition of a Logit:

$$\text{Pr} (Y=0|X) = F (β1X + β1Z) \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where Pr(Y) is the probability of the outcome variable taking values between 0 and 1; X is the predictor variable while Z is the vector of confounding variables. Alternatively, the model could have been estimated using a Probit, however we prefer logit over Probit because of the widespread use of Logit in areas of demographic, behavioural and health issues and due to the advantage that coefficients in the Logit can be interpreted easily in terms of odds ratio.

We run two regression models one with the predictor variable only (bivariate) in order to establish the association between justification of wife beating and respondents' self - reported role in decision making and the other including both the predictor and the confounding variables (multivariate) which include demographic factors like age of the respondent, urban or rural dwelling, education of the respondent and region and socioeconomic status.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Regarding role in decision making 71.57 % of women in the survey reported

having no role in household decision making while 28.43% reported having some role. Regarding different circumstances of decision making highest number of women (48%) reports exercising some role in decision making in health care related matters, 43% reports role in large household purchases and 47% reports having decision making role in visits to family and relatives (Table 1).

Table 1: Women respondents' reported role in decision making

Variable	Descriptive (Percentages)	
Decision making power	Role	No role
Over all	28.43	71.57
Health care	48	52
Large purchases	43	57
Visits to family and relatives	47	53

Among those having no role in decision making 82.73% do not justify wife beating in any circumstances (whereas response is considered not justifying if the respondent do not justify wife beating in any of the five given circumstances). Among those who reports having some role in decision making (whereas response considered of "having role" if respondent reports some role in decision making in any of the four circumstances) 88.76% do not justify wife beating (Table 2A).

TABLE 2A: Beating Justification distribution among confounding variables

1)Beating justification	Not justified (%)	Justified (%)
No Role in decision	82.73	17.27
Some role in decision	88.76	11.24
Burns food	81.33	18.48
Goes without telling	66.56	33.27
Neglect child	65.88	33.94
Refuses intercourse	66.26	33.54
Argues with husband	62.49	37.34
2) Age groups		
15-19	65.97	34.03
20-24	65.13	34.87

25-29	79.67	20.33
30-34	82.03	17.97
35-39	83.06	16.94
40-44	80.62	19.38
45-49	78.86	21.14
3) Urban/Rural		
Urban	90.61	9.39
Rural	79.02	20.98
4) Socio Economic Status		
Poorest	69.15	30.8
Poorer	76.8	23.1
Middle	84.9	15
Richer	91.3	8.63
Richest	96.1	3.82
All socio economic groups	84.4	15.33

Among different circumstances of justification of wife's beating, highest percentage of women (80%) do not justify beating on ground that wife burns food, 65.02% not justifying beating in case wife goes out without telling husband followed by 64.44% of those not justifying beating in case wife neglects child ; 63.22% of the respondent women do not justify wife battery in case she refuses intercourse and 61.11% respondents in the survey are not justifying beating on ground of argument with the husband (Table 2A).

Among different five years age groups, majority of the respondent women in all age groups do not justify wife beating with the highest percentage of women (83.06) not justifying wife beating belonging to the age group 35-39 (Table 2A).

Differences are also seen in the urban and rural dwellers where 90.61% of urban women not justifying wife beating in any of the circumstances compared to 79.02% of rural women. However the difference is not very large. Wife beating justification consistently declines with the increasing educational status of the women with 77.6% uneducated while 97% of highly educated women not justifying wife beating. A similar trend is seen in socio economic status where the number of women not justifying beating rose from 69.16% in the poorest group to more than 96% in the richest group (Table B).

Table 2B: Descriptive statistics of justification of wife beating among different Income Groups

Income Groups	Justification of wife beating		
	No	Yes	Total
Poorest	1,711	763	2,474
Poorer	1,976	594	2,570
Middle	2,181	387	2,568
Richer	2,412	228	2,640
Richest	3,092	123	3,215

Model Estimate

The Logit regression results shows that the coefficient of decision variable with a negative sign indicates with the increasing role in decision making less justification of wife beating is found among respondent with one unit increase in the decision making role justification of wife beating declines by 0.5 (coefficient of decision -0.5 in the bivariate model and -0.3 in the multivariate model). The result is significant at the 95% confidence level (Table 3).

Table3: Logistic Regression; Bivariate Model					
Beating justification	Coef.	St.Err	t-value	p-value	Sig.
Role in decision making	-0.5	0.058	-8.65	0.000'	***
Cons	-1.566	0.027	-58.11	0.000'	***
Pseudo r-squared	0.007	Number of obs	13467		
Chi-square	80.168	Prob > chi2	0		
Akaike crit. (AIC)	11565.86	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	11580.87		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

Table 4 presents the estimates of the full model with main predictor variables (role in decision making) as well as covariates. Including the covariates in our model does not change the estimates of decision making role   (the coefficient changes from -0.5 to just -0.3) so the results are robust to the inclusion of other variables having an impact upon justification of wife beating.

TABLE 4: REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF THE FULL MODEL						
Explanatory Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Decision role	-0.505***	-0.505***	-0.406***	-0.342***	-0.307***	-0.308***
	-0.059	-0.059	-0.06	-0.061	-0.062	-0.063
Age groups						
20-24	-0.115	-0.115	-0.059	-0.055	-0.018	0.036
	-0.123	-0.123	-0.126	-0.128	-0.13	-0.13
25-29	-0.239**	-0.239**	-0.169	-0.127	-0.143	-0.07
	-0.121	-0.121	-0.124	-0.125	-0.128	-0.128
30-34	-0.129	-0.129	-0.024	0.014	-0.075	0.003
	-0.122	-0.122	-0.125	-0.127	-0.129	-0.129
35-39	-0.240*	-0.240*	-0.185	-0.132	-0.311**	-0.213
	-0.124	-0.124	-0.127	-0.129	-0.131	-0.132
40-44	-0.093	-0.093	-0.028	0.053	-0.217	-0.071
	-0.127	-0.127	-0.13	-0.132	-0.135	-0.136
45-49	0.027	0.027	0.084	0.154	-0.151	0.031
	-0.127	-0.127	-0.13	-0.132	-0.134	-0.136
Provinces						
Sindh			0.304***	0.463***	0.344***	0.184**

			-0.075	-0.076	-0.078	-0.08
Khyber pakht:			0.722***	0.725***	0.584***	0.544***
			-0.071	-0.072	-0.074	-0.074
Balochistan			0.105	0.189**	-0.125	-0.315***
			-0.088	-0.089	-0.091	-0.093
Gilgit Baltistan			1.495***	1.661***	1.624***	1.248***
			-0.08	-0.083	-0.085	-0.091
Islamabad			-0.976***	-0.753***	-0.308*	-0.165
			-0.168	-0.17	-0.173	-0.176
Rural /urban						
Rural				0.965***	0.585***	0.193***
				-0.054	-0.057	-0.066
Educational level						
Primary					-0.685***	-0.474***
					-0.083	-0.085
Secondary					-1.336***	-0.989***
					-0.094	-0.1
Higher					-2.088***	-1.623***
					-0.159	-0.167
Socioeconomic status						
Poor						-0.325***
						-0.068
Middle						-0.596***

						-0.079
Richer						-0.942***
						-0.098
Richest						-1.295***
						-0.129
Cons	-1.430***	-1.430***	-1.916***	-2.645***	-1.825***	-1.133***
	-0.108	-0.108	-0.121	-0.13	-0.137	-0.15
Obs.	13467	13467	13467	13467	13467	13467
R-squared	.z	.z	.z	.z	.z	.z
Standard errors are in parenthesis *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1						

The coefficients of age group, except for the age groups 25-29 and 35-39, although showing a lesser justification of wife beating associated with each age group (all coefficients with negative sign), are all insignificant therefore we may predict that age does not matter much in shaping a women's opinion regarding domestic violence at least in the Pakistani society. Same is the case with rural v/s urban women where results are insignificant though estimate predict a higher prevalence of justification of wife beating among rural women than among urban women.

On the other hand, we find the estimates of educational level of the women and her socio-economic status to be most consistent with our hypothesis: with the increasing level of female education and socio-economic status and, therefore, independence, we find a sharp decline in her acceptance of violence against women- the coefficient estimate show a drop in acceptance of wife beating from -0.6 to -2 as the educational level increase from primary to higher education ; while the coefficient for socioeconomic status changes from -0.2 to -1.7 as one moves from poorer to richest groups of female respondents. The results are all significant.

The model also includes estimates for province wise differences in response towards justification of wife beating but these estimates are hard to be interpreted.

Estimates of provincial variables alone cannot be considered robust enough until and unless various geographic, ethnic and developmental differences among provinces ,that may have an important bearing upon the shaping of the behaviours towards acceptance of wife battery are controlled (that may require different methodology and model specification) for which requires a separate study that is beyond the scope of this paper

Odds Ratio

Table 5 combines the results of regression estimates and their corresponding odds ratio percentages. It shows that for unit increase in role in decision making the Odds of justifying beating of wife decreases by more than 26%. The odds ratio increases positively in case of rural areas, therefore, confirming the finding which is common in literature that beating justification is consistently more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban areas. However the odds for the variables of education and socioeconomic status decreases as the percentage of beating acceptance over non acceptance declines consistently and significantly with increase in the educational and socioeconomic status of the respondent women. Although the odds of beating justification for age groups increases, except for the age groups 25-29 , 35-39 and 40-44, the results are insignificant.

Table 5: Regression Results And Odds Ratio Of Justifying Wife Beating Versus Not Justifying

Beating justification	Logit Coefficient (model-6)	z	P>z	Percent change of Odds	%Std X	SDofX
Role in decision	-0.30756	-4.899	0.000	-26.5	-13. 0	0.4513
Age groups						
20-24	0.03607	0.277	0.782	3.7	1.3	0.3576
25-29	-0.06980	-0.545	0.586	-6.7	-2.8	0.4008
30-34	0.00325	0.025	0.980	0.3	0.1	0.3840
35-39	-0.21326	-1.616	0.106	-19.2	-7.7	0.3752
40-44	-0.07095	-0.523	0.601	-6.8	-2.4	0.3401

45-49	0.03142	0.231	0.817	3.2	1.0	0.3294
Provinces						
Sindh	0.18359	2.281	0.023	20.2	7.9	0.4116
KPK	0.54403	7.310	0.000	72.3	24.3	0.3997
Baluchistan	-0.31489	-3.384	0.001	-27.0	-10.4	0.3499
Gilgit Baltistan	1.24798	13.770	0.000	248.3	42.9	0.2862
Islamabad	-0.16534	-0.942	0.346	-15.2	-4.1	0.2556
Area						
Rural	0.19280	2.921	0.003	21.3	10.1	0.4990
Educational level						
Primary	-0.47433	-5.553	0.000	-37.8	-15.0	0.3421
Secondary	-0.98914	-9.916	0.000	-62.8	-31.5	0.3830
Higher	-1.62328	-9.742	0.000	-80.3	-41.5	0.3301
Socio-economic level						
Poor	-0.32483	-4.750	0.000	-27.7	-12.0	0.3930
Middle	-0.59636	-7.531	0.000	-44.9	-20.9	0.3929
Richer	-0.94241	-9.660	0.000	-61.0	-31.2	0.3970
Richest	-1.29533	-10.066	0.000	-72.6	-42.4	0.4263

DISCUSSION

Contrary to previous studies regarding Muslim countries (Fikree 2005, Rafael 2010) this study finds that domestic violence against women is not accepted in general in Pakistani society. Different socioeconomic and demographic factors are responsible for shaping the response towards acceptance of wife beating by their husbands (Martin SL, 1999; Ellsberg et al., 1999). It is seen that although role in decision making is strongly associated with lesser justification of wife beating, a considerably large number of Pakistani women, having no role, whatsoever, in household decision making, reportedly do not justify wife battery. More over the results of the bivariate model changes significantly with the inclusion of other predictors of women's response like education and socioeconomic status.

This study, therefore, finds educational and socioeconomic status of women to be highly significant in shaping her response against intimate partner violence and the coefficient on decision making decreases with the inclusion of these variables in the multivariate model. These findings are consistent to earlier studies (Fikree 2005) thus emphasizing the dire need for a social policy impetus aimed at improving the educational and socioeconomic status of women due to strong influence of these variables upon their behavioural response towards acceptance of domestic violence in general.

Two reasons can explicitly explain such a high prevalence of wife beating in Pakistani society despite its predominantly lesser justification among women in general; the patriarchal system where women are still considered to exercise very little influence when it comes to matters of domestic violence (Yahiya 1998; Ellsberg et al., 1999) .Other reason may lie in many of the cultural paradoxes prevalent in our society whereby violence against women is perpetrated as a norm despite being publicly less justified. Further research is therefore needed at a macro level to assess the precise impact regional and societal differences, family values and norms have upon shaping the behaviour towards acceptance of violence against married women.

Contrary to many other studies, this study finds an overall larger percentage of Pakistani women *not* justifying wife beating than is the case in other Muslim countries (Rafael 2010, & Dalal 2007). As it is seen that decision making role of a women is ultimately influenced by her education and socioeconomic status (Hindin 2003) women empowerment in household decisions may not be effective until and unless it is backed by her strong educational and economic status. Therefore the findings of this study may be considered as an evidence for a broader social policy blueprint aimed at curbing domestic violence against women in Pakistan.

Although regional (or provincial) differences do result in differences in attitudes towards acceptance of wife beating in the society (Rafael 2010) it is misleading to interpret the impact of regional differences in isolation without controlling for the complete set of factors (both time variant and time invariant) that generate differences among regions. An interaction term may well bring a reliable estimate that can be interpreted more

meaningfully than the coefficients on regional dummies alone. However it is seen that excluding the regional dummy does not change the results, coefficient or the odds ratios, significantly in the multivariate model.

Studies also suggests that husbands' attitude towards violence against wife need to be changed first before the economic, social or educational empowerment of women can bring any meaningful change especially, as pointed out before, when the changes are to be brought about in a patriarchal society (Rafael 2010, Dalal, & Janson 2007). Studying the degree of impact change in husbands' attitude towards wife beating may have upon the attitudes and empowerment of women shaping their behavioural response towards domestic violence is, therefore, a potential area of further research. A randomized control trial (RCT) based study is well suited to highlight these associations, if any, and may better inform public policy decisions.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the evidence among many Muslim countries and various studies of other countries, acceptance of wife beating is not strongly associated with the decision making role in the Pakistani society, however, we confirm the trend that with the increase in decision making power, acceptance of wife beating among women declines significantly. We find more evidence in favour of factors like women educational level and her socioeconomic standing that seems to influence her behaviour towards acceptance of wife battery more than her role in decision making alone. Surprisingly age is not found to be a significant determinant of women's acceptance of IPV. Public policies aimed at empowering women and shaping their behaviours towards domestic and intimate partner violence should therefore focus on raising the educational and socioeconomic status of women, both rural and urban, through better schooling of females and inclusion of women households into programs of income generation. This strategy, in itself, is powerful enough to bring the desired social and behavioural change that would contribute to a decline in cases of domestic violence still so common in our society.

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