

**THE LANGUAGE AND THE LAW: A
SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC STUDY OF THE
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PREVENTION AND
PROTECTION) BILL, 2021**

BY

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**The Language and the Law: A Semantic-Pragmatic Study of
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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
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ABSTRACT

Title: The Language and the Law: A Semantic-Pragmatic Study of The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021

The present study comprehensively assesses the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, concerning Pakistan. It explores the nuances of the terminology used in the Bill and looks at how applicable and significant it is in Pakistan's socio-cultural context. The study recognizes that language and law have coexisted historically and that there is still discussion about how they are related, especially regarding legal interpretation. The study uses a nuanced approach provided by Relevance Theory. This theoretical framework offers valuable insights into how language is processed and perceived within legal situations, highlighting its importance and effectiveness within Pakistani society. The study adopts a mixed-method research methodology, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods to thoroughly evaluate the Bill's significance. Content analysis gives qualitative data. Questionnaires with a closed-ended Likert scale are distributed to gather data using a convenience sampling technique. Forty professional lawyers from Islamabad ICT and District Lakki Marwat comprise the target population, allowing for a targeted analysis of viewpoints from legal practitioners working in different geographical contexts. The Bill, which tackles the four main facets of domestic violence—physical, psychological, economic, and sexual—represents a historic piece of legislation within the Pakistani legal system. The research recognizes Bill's acknowledgment of domestic abuse in Pakistan but also points out areas that might be improved. The study found that language and interpretation are two different things and that the interpretation of the legal language depends on the context. It demonstrates a dedication to improving its effectiveness and applicability. Legal jargon and condensed language are found to minimize linguistic relevance because they increase cognitive processing. Implicatures and explicatures are found to differ under different contexts. Furthermore, the study found multiple explicatures of the Bill's clauses, resulting in linguistic ambiguity and different interpretations than the drafters intended. Through careful analysis and consideration, this thesis attempts to add to ongoing discussions surrounding legislative reform and social justice in the Pakistani context.

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DEDICATION

To Ammi, who sees me from beyond.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study by providing its background. It then gives the problem statement, followed by research questions and objectives. Research questions and objectives help carry a study on a fixed path. After that, the research methodology outlines the crux of the data collection and analysis methods. Limitations and delimitations follow, and the section ends with the organization of the study, giving a very brief summary of every chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Domestic violence is a pervasive issue that transcends borders, cultures, and periods, affecting individuals regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location. Embedded within the complex fabric of society, it intersects with language, legislation, and cultural norms, shaping and reflecting the dynamics of power, control, and inequality. Despite concerted efforts to address this scourge, significant gaps persist in understanding its multifaceted nature, particularly within legal frameworks and linguistic expressions.

Domestic violence, language, and legislation are interconnected. Violence of any kind is legally thwarted. The Domestic Violence Prevention Bill 2021 of Pakistan has not been studied extensively, leaving a research gap that the present study tends to fill. The study is done under the lens of Relevance Theory, which gives the researcher room for analysis concerning social and cultural reality. Domestic violence is a vice in which an underpowered person is abused by the overpowered one. Language expresses ideologies and stances. It speaks for and against the victim. To end the suffering, legislation comes into being. However, it is not always true that rules and laws protect the underpowered and vulnerable. In the 1800s, it was legally correct and socially permissible to beat a wife because she was considered property. This leads us to two crucial points about the law (Britannica, 2022). First, that law is designed under social, cultural, and economic influences. Second, the status of the law is not permanent, i.e., it is right at one point in time and becomes wrong at another.

Like other countries, domestic violence is present in Pakistan as well. Kirmani (2021) writes in a newspaper article for Aljazeera that domestic abuse is on the rise in Pakistan, but she adds that it is nothing new in the Pakistani context. In the present times, when the world is shrinking, and language is becoming an essential tool for self-expression, some cases are coming into the limelight. With #MeToo trending, most cases in Pakistan go unreported. Syeda Aliza Sultan (beaten by her husband Feroze Khan) and Sarah Inam (murdered by her husband Imran) are only a fraction of the cases that have ever been reported. She cites the data from the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-2010 to conclude that 28 percent of women aged 15-49 experience intimate partner violence. Khan, Ali, and Khuwaja (2009), after reviewing 13 pieces of research, conclude that in Pakistan, emotional abuse is more recurrent than physical abuse. Ali, Karmaliani, Farhan, Hussain, and Jawad (2021) add that verbal abuse, like calling names, blaming, and threatening, is the primary reason for psychological abuse.

Hafeez (2021), in his analysis, offers an insight into the prevalence of victim blaming in Pakistani society by pointing to male chauvinism. He cites South Asia campaigner for Amnesty International, pointing to how powerful perpetrators often evade responsibility for their crimes. However, this insight sheds light on the systemic challenges that victims of domestic violence have in their pursuit of justice and redress.

However, Rasool and Sardar (2021) are optimistic about recent legislative progress in Pakistan. All, however, now have highly effective legislation to address domestic violence, they add. It is a great step forward, they say, because they hope it will place domestic violence under the State's jurisdiction, not in the home. The increase in authority may also mean an alteration in social thinking and a responsibility to punish perpetrators for their deeds.

Asghar et al. (2018) explore linguistic variation across Pakistani Legal English genres using multidimensional analysis. The research compares eight distinct Pakistani legal genres, totaling around two million words. The findings reveal significant linguistic differences across genres, suggesting that legal language in Pakistan is not uniform but varies by goal, purpose, audience, and context. Each genre's unique linguistic patterns underscore the complexity and variability within legal language based on its functional demands (p. 215).

Mir et al. (2023) suggest that legal language has a rich history of borrowing terminologies. They assert that Pakistani legal discourse is deeply rooted in British colonial experience. Furthermore, with time, Pakistani legal discourse was enriched with Latin terms. Also, the Pakistani legal community is resilient to change (p. 160). According to Mollica (2024), there are many reasons why legal language is difficult and often filled with jargon. One main reason is the use of 'center embedding,' where sentences are nested within each other, making complex structures hard to parse and understand. Furthermore, legal texts are intended to be precise and unambiguous; therefore, they use specialized terms that may be difficult for non-experts to understand. Furthermore, as the law is of a traditional and formal nature, its legalese persists by tradition. Additionally, convoluted structures are used as a marker of the law's power to change the world using a 'performative' language. Finally, the 'copy and edit' process, in which lawyers often work from templates, helps sustain complex language use.

Using Pakistan's patriarchal context as a lens, Khan and Khaleel (2024) examine the language used in the legal drafting of crimes against women and the way courtroom discourse reflects this. They posit that legal language, while structured uniquely, often contains gender biases that favor men and thus reflect societal stereotypes. In recent years, language and law have made strides forward to protect women better, but patriarchal influence continues to be a large barrier to women seeking justice. The findings highlight the need to uphold the rights and dignity of all parties in legal proceedings to establish a just and equitable system that is free from ongoing violence and discrimination against women in Pakistan (p. 160).

According to Singh and Neema (2021), the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021 in Pakistan intends to handle the increasing number of cases of domestic violence during the pandemic by providing protection, relief, and rehabilitation systems for the groups of females, kids, and older people. It suggests harsh penalties for domestic violence, creates special protection committees, and permits complaints against any abuser, regardless of gender. Despite being passed by the National Assembly, the bill was deferred in the Senate and is currently stalled by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) for review because it is incompatible with Islamic principles. Certain religious and political groups, impregnated with the outlook of

patriarchal norms and cultural traditions, criticize the bill, claiming that it is a threat to the social and family structures. Government officials also tried to justify domestic violence as a form of discipline.

Singh and Neema (2021) add that the delay in enacting the bill raises concerns over Pakistan's commitment to protecting human rights, particularly as a signatory to international treaties like CEDAW and ICCPR, which mandate addressing violence against women. Although the bill includes progressive measures, enforcement remains challenging, with systemic barriers such as patriarchal attitudes and inadequate implementation of existing laws undermining its efficacy. Advocacy groups emphasize the urgent need for regulatory surveys, mindset change, and consistent monitoring to combat domestic violence effectively. Given Pakistan's declining gender parity and the alarming frequency of domestic violence, prompt enactment and enforcement of the bill are critical for ensuring justice and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

In general, these perspectives present both the state of domestic violence in Pakistan and the extent of legal responses to such abuse. The legal language in Pakistan has a colonial pretext, and the legal community is hard to change. Fielding's and Hafeez's analysis reveals ongoing problems created by cultural norms and power dynamics, while Rasool and Sardar bring light to progress and change through legislative action.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of Pakistan's Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021, there has been insufficient focus on its linguistic and legislative effectiveness in addressing the complex nature of domestic abuse—particularly the physical, psychological, economic, and sexual dimensions prevalent in the country. This research highlights a significant gap in the linguistic analysis of the Bill, suggesting that an examination grounded in Relevance Theory can shed light on its language's precision, clarity, and cultural adaptability. By evaluating how effectively the Bill articulates and addresses these aspects within Pakistan's socio-cultural context, this study assesses its practical applicability and adequacy in combating domestic violence. Furthermore, the study explores the potential societal impacts of the Bill, aiming to identify areas for linguistic and legislative improvement to enhance its overall efficacy in mitigating domestic abuse in Pakistan.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research is based on the following two objectives. Objectives are the backbone of any research, defining the path on which research treads. The subsequent two objectives co-relate with the two research questions.

1. To conduct a linguistic analysis of the Domestic Violence Bill, focusing on the various interpretations of its language.
2. To analyze how clearly and comprehensively the language of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill addresses the psychological, physical, sexual, and economic aspects of domestic violence in the context of Pakistan.

1.4 Research Questions

The research tends to answer the following research questions. These questions tend to be the backbone of the research. These guided the research to remain on the defined path.

1. How far does the language of *The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021* convey different possible interpretations related to physical, psychological, and monetary aspects of domestic violence?
2. How clearly and comprehensively does the language of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill address the psychological, physical, sexual, and economic aspects of domestic violence in the context of Pakistan?

1.5 Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-method design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to garner a comprehensive understanding of the research subject. Extensive data collection and qualitative data analysis have been undertaken to delve deeply into the intricacies of the topic under investigation. The quantitative data from Likert scale questionnaire questions support the qualitative content analysis.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis contributed significantly to the study's successful conclusion. Qualitative data analysis provided a thorough and detailed examination of the Bill, enabling the researcher to undertake a detailed semantic and pragmatic analysis. This analysis further revealed the prevailing legislation's language, structure, and implications and provided nuanced differences between the legislation

and respective legislative contexts. In contrast, the quantitative data analysis allowed for broad views from the participants regarding their opinions as experts. These methods combined strengthened the study's overall findings since the quantitative results calibrated and corroborated the inferences from the qualitative analysis. In response, a mixed-method approach was used to conduct a holistic and well-rounded investigation of the phenomenon studied while increasing the reliability and depth of the research.

The study is primarily concerned with examining the multifaceted dimensions of domestic violence, encompassing physical, psychological, economic, and sexual aspects as addressed within The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill (2021, p. 6). SPSS, a widely used statistical software package, has been employed to facilitate rigorous data analysis. Using SPSS, the research team can effectively process and analyze the collected data, enabling robust insights and informed conclusions from the study's findings.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This work will be valuable to academic audiences and others. This research drew on Relevance Theory to analyze the National Domestic Violence Prevention Bill 2021 and explore possible interpretations and effectiveness of the legislation in the Pakistani social and cultural context. It also indicates possible gaps and areas for improvement and provides useful suggestions to fill legal gaps between the legal and law enforcement hierarchies in the fight against domestic violence. The research helps to fill the gap in the literature as to how legal documents can be analyzed and what perceptual sense we can derive from domestic violence legislation in Pakistan. Therefore, it is a source of information for academicians in English linguistics, literature, and social science. It also leads us on the path for future research.

The Bill's assessment will be useful for policymakers, attorneys, and advocacy groups to assist in legislation, victim protection, and perpetrator responsibility. This is a much-needed study which is valuable in the lack of research on the subject and contributes to our understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence in Pakistan. They do this by studying the interaction between the language, domestic violence legislation, and social mores in Pakistan.

1.7 Delimitations

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, is the only domestic violence-related legislative measure on which the current study's scope is purposefully delimited. This intentional restriction guarantees a focused and in-depth analysis of the causes and consequences delineated in this legislative framework. Furthermore, the study is further delimited using a predetermined sample size, i.e., 40 people who answered the questionnaires. This purposeful choice seeks to collect enough data for significant insights while maintaining a reasonable sample size that supports in-depth analysis. In addition, the study's sample population is restricted to citizens of Lakki Marwat and Islamabad, giving the results a particular geographic context.

1.8 Limitations

Although this study offers insightful information, it is not without its flaws. First, the data source for the data collection was legal professionals, which may not have included other important groups, including academics, instructors, and professors. With this restricted emphasis, the issue may be presented halfway through as experts in other fields may have important things to contribute. Second, the theoretical framework of the study is restricted to Relevance Theory. The present theory presents a solid platform for analysis, but a more detailed and thorough approach may be facilitated by enlarging the scope of the study to other theoretical views.

Furthermore, theories such as feminist theory, socio-cultural theory, and discourse analysis could provide fresh perspectives on subjects that are beyond the scope of relevance theory. By recognizing these shortcomings, the study highlights areas that warrant further investigation. A more comprehensive viewpoint of the topic could be obtained by extending the participation pool to include various professions. Including several theoretical stances would add complexity to the study with multiple perspectives and help expand the subject's understanding. The shortcomings of this study will be remedied by these initiatives, which will contribute to a more comprehensive and diverse investigation into the dynamics of domestic violence.

1.9 Organization Of Study

This thesis has five chapters, each taking the topic further differently. Chapter One discusses the research issue, its importance, and the goals that will direct the investigation. Chapter Two thoroughly reviews the pertinent literature regarding previous studies, theoretical frameworks, and existing body of knowledge. In addition, this chapter summarizes previous findings and lays the theoretical groundwork for the investigation. Chapter Three describes the research methodology, demographics, sample size, methods, data collection instruments, and other relevant information. The research process is spelled out in this chapter, guaranteeing the transparency and reproducibility of the study. Chapter Four analyzes and presents the research findings based on qualitative and quantitative data obtained with strict techniques. This chapter also discusses the implications of the findings and the researcher's opinions. In Chapter Five, the forward-looking perspective concludes the thesis with a summary of major study findings, reaffirming their importance and suggesting additional research. This thesis intends to use this approach to offer a comprehensive and balanced investigation of the subject matter and contribute to the current body of knowledge on the research topic.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review is an important chapter of the research study as it establishes the rationale that the topic under the research is worth exploring. The primary role of a literature review is to assist researchers by providing a contextual background of relevant research studies conducted earlier. This chapter will go into detail and discuss the following broad areas: the historical development of domestic violence, the stance of the United Nations on domestic violence, Pakistan and domestic violence, and applications of Relevance Theory in legal texts and legal settings. This chapter will also explain a detailed review of previous studies relevant to this research study.

2.1 Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is recurrently used nowadays. We hear it in books, media, and our day-to-day conversation. For some, it is a matter of their home, i.e., something personal, while for some, it is a matter of debate. According to The Britannica Dictionary, domestic can be used to mean the homeland or a household ('Domestic,' 2022). Domestic violence, however, is a broader term that encompasses social and legal connotations. Encyclopedia Britannica deals with the concept elaborately. Domestic violence, it suggests, is a social and legal concept that is used in the broadest sense to refer to any abuse between 'intimate partners.' The violence may be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. It must be noted that the victim is not always female. In rare cases, a male partner is abused by a female. Considering feminism and LGBT culture, the definition is also extended to a same-sex partnership. To contextualize the matter and highlight its importance, it is given that in the United States of America, two to four million victims are recorded annually under domestic violence. Statistics also show that, on average, one-third of all the murdered women in the United States are killed by current or former boyfriends or husbands. Even more gruesome are the circumstances for male victims, where most of the cases go unreported due to the fear of personal shame and scorn from society and due to the unavailability of resource centers (Britannica, 2022).

Domestic violence is not a standalone phenomenon; rather, it is deeply intertwined with the power structure of the very fabric of society. According to ACESDV, which is a Domestic Abuse prevention and awareness organization, domestic abuse relies on physical abuse only. Instead, it is a power game in which a less powerful person is subdued, molested, abused, or used. The inclusion of use is an essential development in defining the term. In addition to the boyfriend/girlfriend and husband/wife, it includes all family members. Rather strikingly and opposed to the definition of domestic violence by Encyclopedia Britannica, ACESDV believes that abuse is a 'learned behavior.' It further reinstates and clarifies the point by saying that anger, mental problems, drugs, or alcohol do not cause it. The definition by ACESDV makes the perpetrator responsible for his/her actions and, thus, does not believe in any 'common excuses' (2019).

2.2 Domestic Violence in the Past and Present

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2022), domestic violence is prevalent in all social, economic, cultural, and educational settings. Its presence in economically and educationally strong backgrounds makes the scene more alarming. Speaking of the factors that aggravate the issue are poverty, unavailability, and unjust distribution of resources and drugs of all kinds. Cultural and societal restraints and household problems also add to the possibility of violence in the domestic setting. While speaking historically, in and until the 1800s, it was permissible for the husband to beat his wife because she was considered property. She was then considered a resource and an entitlement. However, the tide shifted due to the Industrial Revolution, enlightenment, and right-to-property bills. Now that women worked in the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, things were never the same. The welfare of women drastically improved, yet there was the problem of abuse. However, after all these improvements, there was no haven for women. For instance, the 1967 training manual for the International Association of Chiefs of Police stated that detention of male partners in cases of domestic violence is the 'last resort.' The 1970s sees a robust gain in feminist agitation. Feminists now encouraged women to speak up and not to submit to victimization. However, it was not until 1994 that the Violence Against Women Act was passed.

Domestic violence is a vice that has been historically present and has thence tortured multitudes of women. When seen from the historical perspective, it is sensed that such violence will never leave us. In modern times, with the advent of economic dependence and uncertainty, domestic violence plummeted. Moreover, the modern crisis worsens the situation. Piquero et al. (2021) highlight the implications of COVID-19 on domestic violence. They believe that what has historically been gained by humanity in domestic violence prevention has been reversed by the pandemic. The coronavirus has put pressure on the finances of households worldwide. This economic tension has impaired the established social fabric. Now, when more people are in conflict with the expenditure and are under psychological pressure, the reported cases of domestic violence witness a quantitative rise. This problem has targeted marginalized groups with such a force that domestic violence has become routine (pp. 5-6).

They further claim that ongoing COVID has intensified the issues related to domestic violence. It is unclear, however, if or not this hype is related to abnormal household routines or financial problems. Nevertheless, they found that COVID and violence are directly proportional. In this instance, they suggest that humanity must learn from the mistakes that natural disasters give us. They also claim that women's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being is nonetheless related to natural disasters. The epidemic further deteriorates the conflict through economic uncertainty and social chaos.

The governor of Puerto Rico, the researchers note, has declared a state of emergency related to gender-based viciousness. He believes this situation occurred due to the ongoing turmoil and COVID-19. The researchers espouse that such acknowledgment of the matter at hand should be taken seriously at the international level. Furthermore, they elaborate on the problems with law enforcement agencies and the victimization tendencies of the laws made to protect victims. Enforcing such modifications to the established system needs both willpower and dedication.

Regarding language use, the researchers opine that we must not use derogatory and victim-inflicted language. Also, on practical grounds, the scholars suggest that the police should be reformed. They must be trained in handling such delicate issues (Piquero et al., 2021, pp. 5-6).

2.3 United Nations' Stance on Domestic Violence

The United Nations is a global authority on universal issues. Being an international authority, it is deemed fit to discuss its stance on domestic violence. The official website of the United Nations (n.d) takes domestic violence, domestic abuse, or intimate partner abuse as the same things. In defining the terms, the United Nations holds that domestic abuse is the use of power to attain power and the abusive use of power to gain control of someone in the family. It also includes blaming and intimidating into the fold of domestic violence. It also considers domestic abuse a complex phenomenon that originates from the intersection of the psychology of a person, economic factors, and culture. It even says that if one of the partners says to another that another is nothing without him/her, it is also domestic abuse. Mostly, women are the target of such abuse as they are the vulnerable section of society; however, there can be rare cases where the male partner is abused and violated. In a power and control wheel, which is present on the official website, isolation, economic abuse, using children as a tool of abuse, using male privilege, intimidation, and threats all come under the definition of domestic abuse. However, physical and domestic abuse is the most recurrent, but all other symptoms can be seen.

United Nations has passed various resolutions which indicate its serious attitude towards domestic violence. Resolutions are serious legislation because the United Nations General Assembly passed them. Most Member States agree to mold their conduct under such resolutions. According to United Nations General Assembly's Resolution 48/104 (1993), which is the Resolution of the United Nations for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, declares that there is an urgent need for the 'universal application' for women to be entitled to human dignity, liberty, and security. It also acknowledges that gender inequality is an obstacle to economic emancipation and the overall development of the country or a community. It makes the recognition and implementation of such reform in every member country part and parcel of ensuring a bright future.

Furthermore, the resolution also acknowledges the depravity and the gruesome reality of women who come from minorities because, it says, such women already face extra challenges for being peripheral (p. 1). Likewise, Article 3 of the resolution clarifies that every woman is by birth free like any other man and, at this moment,

entitled to fundamental human rights like the right to life, property, and equality. Also, laws are enshrined with clauses that protect the concerned community's underpowered segment. The resolution extends its sway to the customs and cultural or religious practices that undermine women and make exploitation possible as compared to the standards defined by the United Nations. Article 5, in strong and affirmative language, directs and tends to get the confidence of all the allied organs of the organization to displace their duties for the rich and effective dialogue and to gain regional cooperation. It says that without domestic-level cooperation, radical shifts in domestic violence are but a sham (pp. 2-4).

The report of the United Nations' Secretary-General (2004) enumerates the list of countries that are adamant about legislating seriously and are willing to take some drastic steps to eradicate domestic abuse. Interesting, however, is the fact that most countries seem of the view that women are the prime victims, which they are right because the United Nations affirms that women are an underpowered segment in many cultures and societies around the world (pp.3-4). The report concludes that only laws can eradicate domestic violence. Honor killing and exploitation in the name of honor are entrenched in socio-psychological and eco-cultural attitudes. To that end, governments of the Member States worldwide must debate internationally. Non-government organizations and local influencers are considered to materialize such objectives. The report states that an increasing program might be successful when a matter at hand cannot be cured by law. Data plays a crucial role because until and unless elaborate data is present, solutions cannot be suggested. Governments are requested to take steps to retrieve and analyze data effectively. Likewise, governments are requested to accelerate the process to criminalize all the actions that abuse or misuse or tend to abuse or misuse unprivileged and underpowered. Economic emancipation and equality should be prioritized, and cultural and social aspects must be respected. It has been made clear that a successful policy can only be formulated and implemented if most key stakeholders sit at the same table (pp. 18-19).

United Nations General Assembly Resolution (2007) yet again brings the matter into the spotlight, but this time, the title itself suggests intensifying the efforts for the elimination of domestic violence. It is 'reaffirming' the obligation of all the states to protect fundamental human rights and discrimination based on gender and sex. It is a

seven-page document, brief but powerful it is; it makes it clear that domestic violence is rooted in historically established gender inequality. Any violence against women denies them any human rights to which they are entitled. This unequal treatment leads to the marginalization of women from the national policy, the intensity of which varies from country to country and from culture to culture. It recognizes health issues as well. Women are supplementary prone to diseases due to the unavailability of resources, and they are taxed unequally higher on fundamental health products; the resolution wants to put an end to this. It says that women are as crucial to the economy and well-being of a nation as men. In this resolution, violence against women means any action that results in physical, psychological, or sexual damage. It asks the Member States to condemn violence against women and to put an end to or resolve such cultural or social practices.

Furthermore, it ‘stresses’ that states should defend the human rights of their respective citizens and punish the perpetrators. It further suggests that States must amend and, if needed, abolish laws that are somewhat promoting gender-based violence or have discriminatory effects on women. It empowers women, especially ‘poor women,’ by revising economic policies. Laws and policies defend the rights of the citizens; thus, laws must be improved so that violence against women can be resolved. Further attention is needed for an ethnic minority or women of indigenous cultures. Impunity for violence should be ended so that the perpetrators must not roam freely while the victim is caged because this attitude promotes such actions. Humans are social animals who do bad things frequently if they are not held accountable. States are directed and helped maintain better health systems, which reduce diseases in women and childbirth complications and increase life expectancy. Awareness is indispensable, so states are directed to initiate such programs. This initiative will stop violence from being committed in the very first place. Education is a tool that spreads awareness, so it must be of high quality. Women and men must be educated to protect each other, not the war round. The resolution alarms the Nations that in armed conflicts, it is women who suffer the most, which must be stopped at once (pp. 1-6).

Dikwal-Bot (2018) conducted a multi-disciplinary study to examine how Nigerian women use blogs as a weapon to respond to the marginalization of women in the country. The researcher used a mixed-method approach comprising posts,

comments, and interviews. The data comprised 135 posts and 405 comments on female-run blogs, and eight Nigerian bloggers were interviewed. “Rejection of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill” has mainly been focused. This study is essential practically and politically because it focuses on the omissions and misrepresentations in the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, indicating that the articulations of gender /equality (in Nigeria) are often laced with dominant cultural ideologies. The study concludes that language is used to validate gender inequality and that social or digital platforms can be used to fight gender-based inequality.

2.4 Domestic Violence in Pakistan

Domestic violence is a pandemic that recognizes no boundary or border. However, domestic violence plagues third-world countries like Pakistan more extremely. The following discussion places domestic violence in terms of Pakistan.

According to a study conducted by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) titled *Factsheet on Domestic Violence During the COVID-19 Lockdown in 2020*, an alarming 90% of Pakistani women have experienced some form of domestic violence at some point in their lives. This study also highlighted a significant increase in violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that the lockdowns and resulting social and economic pressures exacerbated an already dire situation. In addition to the findings of the HRCP, the Aurat Foundation, a prominent women’s rights organization in Pakistan, released its *Annual Statistics 2020 Report*, which further underscores the prevalence of violence against women in the country. Aurat Foundation’s report says that in 2020, 11,000 cases of violence against women were documented. These incidents are broken down into categories, with domestic violence leading the way to 4,775 cases. Then followed rape, gang rape, which amounted to 2,297, and murder, 1,033 (Ali and Inam, 2023).

Zubair, Haider, and Khattak (2018) conducted a study to find out the hurdles in the implementation of women’s protection laws in Pakistan, and they analyzed laws related to girls and women. They have chosen the Sindh province of Pakistan as the research setting for their study. The results of their study show that the main challenges to implementing these laws are at the structural level, at the level of police, judicial, etc.

In addition, the interests of different political leaders are also a main hindrance to implementing such laws.

Muneer (2017) did a comprehensive research study on women's status in Pakistan. The main objective of her study is to sort out the challenges to implementing pro-women laws. She has used both qualitative and quantitative methods for her research study. The results of her study show that these challenges in the implementation of pro-women laws provide a vacant ground for inequality, cruelty against women, injustice, and violence. Further, the study suggests that executing these laws can be a breakthrough in suppressing gender equality.

Zakar, Jalil, and Qureshi (2013) conducted a cross-sectional survey to explain the prevalence of lifetime and current physical wife abuse and its correlation with resources and the dependence of women on marriage. The multi-technique sampling method is used, and the research sample consists of 151 married women from two different villages in the Mirpurkhas district of Sindh, Pakistan. Questionnaires were used as a data collecting tool, and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 1.7. The study concludes that physical wife abuse is a global issue, and household resources, as well as socioeconomic dependence on the marriage of women, have some connection with physical wife abuse. The study suggests that education can play a crucial role in helping women earn a livelihood independently.

Similarly, Khan, Ali, and Khuwaja (2009) studied domestic violence among Pakistani women. They have tried to figure out the burden of domestic violence and the possible reasons behind domestic violence. This study is based on already published pieces of literature on domestic violence in Pakistan, and the researchers have analyzed those pieces of literature. The study concludes that there are certain factors that prone women to domestic violence, for example, low education of men and women, low empowerment of women, misconceptions about laws about women in Islam, poverty, etc. The study further gives some recommendations on how to prevent domestic violence. It suggests that violence against women should be highlighted on national and international levels, free access to education should be given to both males and females, and laws should strictly be followed.

Khatri (2020) commences an elaborate study and finds that gender inequality in Pakistan has roots in long historical misogyny, which is further supplemented by

cultural and religious bigotry. He states that the British Raj has much to do with the present scenario because the seeds of such cultural practices and religious interpretations were seeded in colonial India. Now, coming back to Pakistan, Khatri is worried about how language is used to abuse the less powerful segment of society, i.e., women. He declares that most of the psychological abuses are rooted in the use of infected language (pp. 69-70).

Niaz (2004) asserts that Pakistani elite women enjoy rights at par with those of developed countries. She further claims that the elite or even middle class makes up just a fraction of the population. The rest of the underdeveloped swaths of Pakistan lack the luxuries. The problem is that psychological abuse is not known at all. Religious extremism and societal prejudice further worsen the matters at hand. She adds that violence of every kind has become an acceptable measure through which man asserts and holds his power. This attitude is degrading the psychological morale of women at large. She also highlights the hypocrisy by saying that even women in some authority promote such gruesome acts.

In Dawn, while referring to the Domestic Violence Prevention Bill, 2021 Pansota (2021) is relieved that at last, with much ado, psychological aspects have been included in the domain of domestic violence. He says that it is the first time that psychological abuse is even considered a vice. According to him, emotional abuse refers to any non-physical behavior that aims to “control, intimidate, subjugate, demean, punish, or insult another person through the use of dilapidation, embarrassment, or terror.” Behaviors that can be categorized as emotionally abusive range from verbal abuse (belittling, berating, constant criticism) to more subtle tactics, such as “manipulation, intimidation and refusal to be pleased.”

2.5 Relevance Theory

Relevance theory, presented by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, connects the language to the context in which it is used. The following discussion presents the historical background of Relevance Theory with its salient features.

According to Braseth (2010), relevance theory is based on the philosopher Paul Grice’s work on meaning and conversation and theoretical advances in the cognitive revolution in linguistics and psychology. It has been one of the leading pragmatic

theories since the late 1970s and the 1980s when Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson developed it. Both Sperber and Wilson continue to work on developing the theory. The contributions of relevance theory to the new fields of experimental and developmental pragmatics and the philosophy of language have been substantial. Relevance theory is the idea in the domains of pragmatics and semantics, saying that the communication process has other factors like inference and context apart from message encoding, transport, and decoding. Relevance is typically an attribute of cognitive process inputs such as assumptions, ideas, and utterances. Sperber and Wilson provide two principles of relevance that encapsulate two key assumptions about human cognition and communication: a first or cognitive principle of relevance and a second or communicative principle of relevance. The first of these principles is that ‘Human cognition tends to be geared toward maximizing relevance.’ Second, “every act of ostensive communication presumes its optimal relevance.”

Braseth (2010) adds that the relevance theory aims to provide a psychologically realistic and explicit communication account. It provides basic statements about general cognition and utterances and the processing thereof. The former is the cognitive principle of relevance: An input to a cognitive process is more relevant, the more beneficial impacts it has on the mind’s representations of the world, and less relevant, the more work it requires to obtain it. Relevance theory claims that what a speaker communicates falls into two classes: explicatures, i.e., propositions, the logical form of the sentence uttered; implicatures, i.e., other propositions conveyed, implicatures. A second major assumption of relevance theory is that the content a speaker intends to convey cannot be linguistically encoded entirely. The linguistic underdetermination of meaning has been researched, and accounts have been developed on interpreting specific linguistic items and types of utterances. The specific research areas include lexical pragmatics, figurative speech, metaphor and irony, the interpretation of discourse connectives, and linguistic items with non-truth conditional meaning.

2.6 Relevance Theory and Pragmatics

Relevance Theory explains how people communicate by always attempting to maximize relevance in what they say to other people. Pragmatics studies both language and context and how language brings meaning in social contexts, with a focus other than the literal meaning of words. This is taken further by Relevance Theory, which

proposes that speakers always strive for the greatest communicative effect with the most economical cognitive effort in the expectation that listeners will infer messages as relevant to them. This theory examines how and why language users focus on specific meanings within research in a complex or nuanced communicative setting. In studying how relevance is negotiated in communication, researchers can learn something about the implicit and explicit aspects of language, particularly where language is used in cultural or contextual circumstances where this is of importance.

Pirker and Smolka (2017) conclude their study by saying that linguistics and pragmatics need to be integrated into the study of interpretation in international law. While there is existing research on the topic from a legal-dogmatic or law and economics perspective, there is limited use of linguistics and pragmatics. The article demonstrates how these fields can help interpret international law using examples. However, it is essential to note that pragmatic theory cannot make the final interpretive decision. The article also explains how relevance theory can be used to interpret legal language. While legal interpretation requires intentionalism similar to ordinary communication, legal interpretation has unique properties that guide and constrain the interpretive process in a normative way. International lawyers may argue that the theoretical support of language use is unnecessary, but understanding how the human mind processes a treaty can lead to a better understanding of interpretation.

Furthermore, they opine that further research is necessary to support the connection between interpretation in pragmatics and international law. This could help courts and other interpreting agents to apply norms objectively. However, language is underdetermined, and pragmatic inferences can be defeated, leaving room for multiple interpretive “discovery” processes. While the overarching goal of international law is to achieve a correct interpretation in compliance with norms, pragmatic Relevance Theory does not establish rules leading to a single correct interpretation. Instead, criteria such as cognitive effort can favor a particular interpretation. In international law, interpretation may be a conscious, reflective activity requiring effort, thinking, and evaluation. As we gain more insight from pragmatic theory, we can move towards a better understanding of legal interpretive decisions (264-266).

According to Pirker and Smolka (2019), the Relevance Theory emphasizes inferential processes in communication over social rules. It states that communication

is a two-fold intentional process, where the communicator must show a communicative intention, and the addressee must infer the information. The principle of relevance aims to maximize relevance while weighing up processing effort as costs and cognitive effects as benefits. The comprehension procedure follows a path of least effort, testing interpretive hypotheses until expectations of relevance are satisfied. Relevance Theory challenges linguistic approaches that rely on shared conventions for communication. Instead, it suggests that communicators and addressees use their innate mind-reading ability to understand each other. This eliminates the need for mutual knowledge and instead relies on mutual manifestness. In this approach, the principle of relevance is used to interpret communication until a hypothesis fulfills the expectations of both participants based on the context. This example from international law demonstrates inference and interpretation difficulties based on conventions. In an exam, one student correctly inferred that they were answering a question in a Swiss university and identified the relevant state of the law in Switzerland. This process of interpretation shows that Relevance Theory provides a more helpful account than thinking in terms of conventions and mutual knowledge requirements. Even though the convention failed for one student, communication did not break down entirely, and the student reached an understanding of the exam question. Relevance Theory suggests that students followed the path of least effort in computing cognitive effects and stopped when they found their expectations of relevance satisfied. For one student, the contextual element of writing an exam satisfied him or her with a different interpretive hypothesis. Relevance Theory is reductionist and takes an individual and psychological perspective, while cognitive sociology is more interested in how patterns of underlying mental activity pertain to the dynamics of social interaction. Both disciplines can benefit from one another (pp. 443-447).

Furthermore, while writing about pragmatics and international law, Pirker and Smolka (2019) explain how cognitive pragmatics can help interpret international law. The example shows how an interpreter can infer that Prisoners of War captured at sea are not prohibited from being held on ships, even though Article 22 of the law prohibits holding them on ships. This is done by broadening or loosening the linguistic content encoded in the term “land” based on context. The concept of land is rich in interpretation, resulting in a so-called ad hoc concept that can be remarkable. Relevance

Theory poses a treaty's descriptive analysis. It attempts to illustrate the cognitive process of choosing an interpretation (pp. 443-447).

In the framework of Relevance theory, Smolka and Pirker (2018) explore the possible ways in which Pragmatics could handle the distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning. It addresses the processes of interpretation in international law by focusing on modeling and considering cases of what is possible in interpreting these processes. This analysis analyzes the connectives "and" and "or" in terms of international law's conceptual and procedural elements through practical examples. The findings highlight that interpreting agents in international law encounter difficulties in interpreting terms including 'and' and 'or,' which are not sufficiently explicitly spelled out by the interpreting agents concerning the ordinary meaning of such terms or in providing specifications of how they reach their interpretation. Procedural meaning is shown to provide a compelling way of making explicit the reasoning under the Relevance theory in the paper. First, it argues that language is not a rigid code and that the interpretative choices of legal agents remain subjective. The approach of international law and pragmatics within the Relevance theory framework is idiopathic and correspondent insofar as it provides a descriptive rather than prescriptive perspective on interpretation. The paper suggests that procedural meaning can potentially enhance understanding of the interpretation process for various lexical items. While the current study focuses on selected examples ("and" and "or"), it acknowledges that further research is necessary to explore the broader applicability of procedural meaning (pp. 136-138).

Moreover, Smolka and Pirker (2018) propose that procedural meaning in legal interpretation aligns with the standard Relevance-theoretic account by restricting interpretation and guiding the addressee along a specific inference path. A suggested revision posits that procedural meaning may also serve an argumentative or persuasive function. Connectives, such as "and" and "or," contribute to relevance by guiding the addressee's comprehension path, as demonstrated in this paper. Additionally, they may attract the addressee's attention, prompting not only the drawing of an appropriate conclusion but also encouraging contemplation of its reasons (pp. 136-138).

2.7 Relevance Theory and Law

Legal language is condensed in meaning and entrenched in legal jargon. Although exact, legal language offers flexibility, opening it to various interpretations. Such interpretations occur when legal language is studied and used in different contexts. Relevance theory studies language within the context. The following discussion presents the interplay of relevance theory and law.

According to Witczak-Plisiecka (2006), describing legal language (Legal Language) as a self-contained entity using the relevance-theoretic approach is challenging because linguistic meaning is inherently ambiguous. Although Relevance Theory can explain the language of the courtroom, lawyer-client consultations, and linguistic performance of minority groups, providing a systematic account of legal communication mediated via texts and legal language as a sublanguage is complex. The broad context definition in Relevance Theory makes it challenging to measure objectively. Legal proceedings aim to establish mutual knowledge among all parties involved, but although legal language is explicit, it is not universally accessible. The diversity of information in legal documents can reduce relevance to the audience rather than enhance communication. Therefore, the Relevance Theory explanation can be seen as one more motivation for the Plain Language Movement.

Moreover, Witczak-Plisiecka (2006) asserts that the context of legal communication involves knowledge of relevant codes and inference. Communicators choose the most appropriate stimuli for a given context. The degree of ostensivity depends on the audience's expertise in legal language. Genre labels provide clues for proper interpretation and enhance the cognitive effect. Code vs. inference distinction and relevance may explain the fossilization of form in legal genres. Some genres involve a wide array of possible matters, such as contracts, which require the simplification of language. The audience of legal documents includes professionals and non-specialists, making it difficult to characterize. Relevance is a binary value that results from the interplay between processing effort and cognitive effects. The stylistics of the legal genre should lower the processing effort and raise the mental impact. Legal language has crucial differences in perception of what is explicitly stated depending on the audience (183-186).

2.8 Characteristics of Legal Discourse

Legal language is designed to guide legal procedures and define rights. It is characterized by precision to avoid ambiguity and ensure consistency. However, its specialized jargon often limits accessibility, complicating understanding, especially for non-experts. Additionally, legal discourse must be culturally sensitive to remain relevant and effective in diverse societies. These complexities highlight the need for clarity and accessibility in legal communication.

2.8.1 Legal Language and Interpretation

Scholars have explored how linguistic norms and legal interpretations intersect, emphasizing the importance of clarity in legal communication. Andruszkiewicz (2020) discusses discrepancies between general and legal linguistic norms, advocating for codified standards to improve accessibility. Glogar (2023) underscores the significance of context in legal interpretation, while Martínez et al. (2022) suggest simplifying complex syntax to enhance clarity. Rehman (2024) proposes discourse analysis to resolve syntactic ambiguities in legal texts. These studies highlight the need for interdisciplinary approaches to improve the clarity of legal documents.

2.8.2 Ambiguity in Legal Language and Its Impact

According to Dosad (2025), legal language, designed for simplicity, often becomes a barrier to understanding. Originally intended to empower, it now complicates interpretation. The inherent ambiguity in legalese poses a significant challenge, particularly in sensitive areas such as domestic violence. Study by Khaleel et al. (2023) reveal how legal jargon often reflects societal biases, especially gender disparities in sexual violence cases. This ambiguity can undermine the pursuit of justice by failing to communicate laws effectively to those who need them most.

2.8.3 Cultural and Socio-Religious Influences in Legal Discourse

Legal discourse is deeply influenced by cultural and religious contexts, which shape its interpretation and application. Ricca (2023) argues that law is inherently shaped by culture, challenging the view of legal norms as entirely objective. According to Khaleel et al. (2023), in Pakistan, legal interpretations are often influenced by patriarchal societal norms, particularly in areas such as inheritance and gender-based violence. Similarly, studies in Nigeria highlight how socio-cultural norms contribute to

domestic violence and hinder legal recourse for women (Nwaezuke & Afamnede, 2025).

Legal reforms must address these cultural and societal influences to ensure that justice is applied equitably, without perpetuating harmful stereotypes or biases.

2.8.4 Simplification and Accessibility of Legal Texts

The complexity of legal language, often referred to as "legalese," can significantly impede accessibility. Simplified legal texts, as shown in the Rubab et al. (2020) study, improve understanding and make legal rights more accessible to the general public. This study advocates for the use of Plain English to enhance public comprehension of legal obligations. Simplifying legal language not only improves accessibility but also promotes transparency, ensuring that legal processes are inclusive and comprehensible.

Making legal texts easier to understand is a crucial step toward creating a more inclusive and transparent legal system.

2.9 Works Related to Relevance Theory

Sartika and Pranoto (2021) used relevance theory in their study to analyze humor in *The Big Bang Theory*. According to them, the study of pragmatics is needed to understand the communication pattern in humor. As a result, this study aims to examine the humor created in *The Big Bang Theory* from the standpoints of cognition and communication. The analysis utilizes the descriptive technique and Sperber and Wilson's notion of relevance theory. The research reveals that many senses of humor are founded on relevance communication, implying that relevance theory must be utilized to grasp the context of the humor. Furthermore, the writer observed that the mechanism of humor in *The Big Bang Theory* is using the moment of optimal relevance of cognitive principle, which means that when the audience has a common presumption of a context of the conversation, the speaker or the characters in the sitcom is producing or uttering something unexpected to make the audience laugh or joy in humor.

A research study of the relevance-theoretic perspective on legal language was conducted by Witczak-Plisiecka (2006). The study attempts to present legal language from the theoretical perspective of relevance. It is on the English legal texts. The analysis's first question is whether relevance theory, a psychological theory of

communication that emphasizes an individual's perception of communicative stimuli, is an adequate basis for describing language in restricted semantic domains, particularly in the legal context. The paper deals with related issues and tries to situate legal language analysis in the framework of relevance theory. The conclusion is that the legal domain cannot be contradicted by Relevance Theory when analyzing language. All Relevance Theory principles can be carried out successfully. However, the description is, at the same time, very general, and in fact, it is impossible to use it to define Legal Language against general language (p. 180-181).

Gan's (2015) study entitled *A Study of the Humor Aspect of English Puns: Views from the Relevance Theory* uses Relevance Theory to analyze puns as humorous devices. Puns have many different functions in utterances as well. In this paper, Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory is used to analyze how the humor effects of puns are constructed. In comprehending a pun, the audience decodes the communicator's ostensive utterance in its context. If the context contradicts the usual interpretation, the audience rebuilds a new assumption with their encyclopedic knowledge and logical and lexical information, deduces the real implication of the utterance—and appreciates the significant humor effects of English puns. Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory has been used here to analyze how audiences comprehend puns' humor. It is claimed that relevance is compatible with human psychology. Sperber and Wilson define relevance as a combined function of effort and effects, also mentioned as achieving optimal relevance. The whole comprehension process is one of searching for optimal relevance. According to Relevance Theory, audiences will cognitively select and adjust their contextual assumptions as they listen to an utterance. It is further concluded that when comprehending puns when a contextual assumption contradicts the significant context, the audience has to abandon their first understanding and rebuild a new one according to their encyclopedia knowledge of lexical and logical information. They can decode and arrive at the intended context with that extra effort (pp. 1211-1215).

Tendahl and Gibbs (2008) evaluate two directions of metaphor research within linguistics, cognitive linguistics and relevance theory, which both aim to capture essential aspects of the reason for the metaphor and how people ordinarily use and understand metaphor in daily life. Contrary to most received opinions, it is argued that cognitive linguistics and relevance theory provide complementary perspectives on

metaphor. Both theories offer essential insights into the role of metaphor in cognition and language use and suggest detailed hypotheses on metaphor understanding that, indeed, are part of a comprehensive theory of metaphor.

According to Al-Jarrah and Abu-Dalu (2018), strategic ambiguity is translated using relevance theory. Their research aims to see how Relevance Theory can handle one specific translation problem: ambiguous structures of a strategic nature. It provides a conceptual framework for how the translator should manage a pervasive ambiguity problem at the discursial level. A relevance-theoretic analysis would depart from probably all previous analysis models in that a ‘good’ translation would not be an interpretation of the text but would leave the door open for all interpretations for which the original text provides evidence. Thus, the translator is not an interpreter but a translator. If this is true, ambiguity resolution should not be a viable alternative. This research paper argues how a strategically ambiguous structure should be translated from a relevance-theoretic perspective.

Zhao (2014) studies the textual function of discourse markers under the framework of Relevance Theory. This paper deals with the textual function of discourse markers and how they make the text coherent. Specifically, this paper analyses discourse markers within the Relevance Theory framework, including their motivation and textual function. Discourse markers influence utterance interpretation cognitively in terms of the essentials of Relevance Theory, and their employment is likely to provide the hearer with procedural guidelines for searching for optimal relevance and consequently cast constraints upon his interpretation.

As Zhao (2014) shows, adopting discourse markers in speech communication can facilitate the hearer’s search for optimal relevance of utterances and discourse coherence. From the speaker’s point of view, they can help the speaker to organize the information and to prompt communicative situations. The textual function of discourse markers in conversation, analyzed from the hearer, is to constrain the hearer’s interpretation of utterances so that the hearer’s processing effort cost is the least for the hearer to achieve optimal relevance, entitling the hearer to recover the proposition, resulting in the least contextual effects in the most minor and most accessible context. Discourse markers help the hearer search for optimal relevance and make the discourse coherent.

2.10 Comparative Analysis of Domestic Violence Legislation and its Effectiveness

Several jurisdictions have carried out comprehensive analyses on the effectiveness and implementation of laws on domestic violence, revealing both accomplishments and concerns. This section meticulously reviews noteworthy comparative studies to illustrate how legal systems and cultural contexts impact the efficacy of laws across different countries.

2.10.1 South Africa

South Africa's Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 went through many revisions to address emerging issues in domestic violence law. Sibisi (2023) specializes in offenses, defenses, economic abuse, and potential harm while evaluating changes. The proposed amendments intend to differentiate domestic violence from other crimes, which might increase victim protection and responsibility. Notwithstanding these legislative initiatives, the involuted nature of the legal language and protracted procedural processes remain major obstacles to effective enforcement (Sibisi, 2023).

Sibisi (2016) provides an adroit practitioner's perspective on the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, accentuating that the initial intent of the law was to shield victims with the highest level of protection. Even 20 years after it was enacted, the number of reported cases still rises. In *Omar v. Government of the Republic of South Africa and Others* (2006), the court upheld the constitutional validity of section 8, dealing with protection orders and arrest warrants. However, as it seems that South Africa is having trouble fulfilling its obligations under the Act, the ongoing upsurge in domestic abuse cases raises questions about the efficacy of the Act (Sibisi, 2016).

2.10.2 India

The Domestic Violence (Prevention) Bill 2002 sparked much debate in India. Sunder Rajan (2004) explains how feminist legal NGOs fought for a more inclusive definition of home space, challenging traditional property rights. The proposed law emphasized the right of the victims—usually women—to remain in their homes, challenging the notion of ultimate male ownership. This drastic shift was intended to safeguard women without external support from destitution. Despite the progressive

intents of the plan, lawmakers repudiated it because they were concerned about property rights and social mores.

2.10.3 Australia

In examining the gendered intentions and unintended consequences of domestic abuse laws in Queensland, Australia, Nancarrow (2019) explores the issue. It was not women's fault 'turning the crime on its head,' it was the law's. The research illustrates the ambiguous situation between legal goals and practical results, emphasizing that we should concentrate on the type of violence rather than its context.

2.10.4 Pakistan

According to Zahoor et al. (2021), the evolution of domestic violence laws in Pakistan reflects a gradual recognition of women's rights and the need for legal protections against abuse. Historically, these laws were deeply influenced by cultural, religious, and patriarchal norms. The earliest notable reform came with the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961, which aimed to address issues such as polygamy and provided women with certain rights in marriage and divorce. However, these measures were often insufficient due to societal resistance and legal loopholes. During General Zia-ul-Haq's era, the Islamization of laws, including the controversial Hudood Ordinances, further entrenched gender inequalities.

General Pervez Musharraf's government made significant progress by ensuring legislative changes to empower women. The Protection of Women Act, 2006, is a landmark act that repealed some of the provisions of the Hudood Ordinances that had victimized women in the name of morality. Later, the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act 2011 and Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention Act 2011 sought to abate honor crime and acid attacks by providing more stringent punishments to the offenders. These were reforms that, for the first time, acknowledged and legislated against different kinds of gender-based violence (pp. 557-559).

Furthermore, Zahoor et al. (2021) posit that provincial legislation in the 2010s further strengthened the legal framework against domestic violence. Sindh's Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013, and similar laws in Baluchistan, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa introduced definitions and protections against physical, emotional, and financial abuse. These laws emphasized the establishment of

protection committees and mechanisms to ensure victims' safety. The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act, 2016, stands out for its comprehensive scope, including provisions for cybercrime and surveillance.

Recent events have underscored the difficulty of ensuring these laws' implementation and enforcement. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence Bill, 2021, and amendments to the National Commission on the Status of Women Act attempt to fill the gaps in enforcement and accountability. These advancements come with societal resistance, lack of awareness, and systemic barriers. A review of these laws indicates how cultural norms, political will, and campaigning by women's rights organizations have influenced the evolution of a better fairer legal framework (pp. 560-568).

2.11 Meta-Analysis and Systematic Review

Cordier et al. (2021) pursued a systematic review and meta-analysis of how well protection orders (PO) work to reduce the re-offence of domestic abuse. The study found that offenders without a history of violence or stalking were less likely to break POs and that the more effective POs were those with arrests. They also found disparities between victim reports and police records, showing that more uniform ways of assessing the efficacy of POs are needed.

2.11.1 Indonesia

According to Chrisbiantoro and Yusuf (2023), Law No. 23 of 2004 is an implementation that needs the attention and protection of the state, law enforcement, and the community. As the legal measures home on domestic abuse are not being properly enforced, they need to be backed up with more forceful and concerted action.

2.11.2 United Kingdom

Aldridge (2021) criticizes the United Kingdom's plan to criminalize controlling and abusive conduct, or 'lying and controlling.' While the gender symmetry paradigm may detract from the focus on gendered violence, the substitution of 'violence' for 'abuse' in the legislation wording marks an enlarged view of the whole. This adjustment casts doubt on the government's pledge to address the root problem of domestic violence.

2.11.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

Simović and Simović (2022) and Kolarić and Marković (2022) studied how Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia implement domestic abuse laws. The studies stress the value of interagency collaboration and its preventative measures, helping reduce incidences and crimes. While this is the case, there are issues relating to public awareness and constant implementation.

2.11.4 Pakistan

Hussain and Khan (2023), in their work, analyze domestic violence frequency and its effects on Pakistan, evoking promising results as well as cultural concepts such as shame and fear of being in vengeance. This study aimed to examine the impact, extent, and difficulties of practicing anti-domestic abuse laws in Pakistan. A hybrid methodology was adopted based on the study of legal case studies and surveying 140 women. Sexual abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse, and physical abuse were found to occur at high frequency, with serious negative consequences for health. Fear factors like social stigma, divorce, retaliation, and future instability discourage victims from reporting abuse and thereby point to an unfinished agenda in the fight against both women and children abuse. According to this research, the enactment and enforcement of legislation against abuse of the domestic type are missing the mark. However, some domestic violence was reported, admitted, and dealt with, while others were described as personal issues and, when recorded, were not followed up on. The research provided comprehensive measures for supportive services for victims, reinforcement in law enforcement, raising public awareness, and advocating for gender equality.

Interventions should be further investigated in unreported cases to determine how well they work. Findings call for a concerted effort to stall domestic violence and for the protection and justice of all Pakistani women. Their study finds that legislation against domestic violence is adopted and applied at different rates and suggests a large number of interventions to increase public awareness and enhance the enforcement of the law.

2.11.5 European Union

According to Picchi (2022), The European Commission's proposed Directive aims to set basic parameters for victim protection and access to justice by standardizing

the criminalization of violence against women. The study aims to fill legislative gaps in the European Union and to assert a common front against domestic abuse across the EU.

2.12 Judicial Perspectives and General Frameworks

In Ismaili (2023), criminal responsibility and domestic abuse are examined concerning the need for a victim-focused strategy and to hold offenders to account. It emphasizes the importance of legal safeguards, as well as lawyer or victim assistance to survivors, and to a broader social and economic impact of domestic abuse. Similarly, Bishop (2016) and Caragnano (2018) emphasize the limitations of legal responses to domestic violence, arguing for a more nuanced understanding of domestic violence as a gendered crime and international frameworks such as the Istanbul Convention aimed at comprehensive protection and prevention.

2.12.1 Russia

Magomedov (2022) examines the struggles and lengthy work to draft a domestic abuse statute in Russia. Much effort has been invested in implementing a full law, including the draft of the 2019 bill. They have been no less resistant and critical. The research highlights political and cultural obstacles in Russia's attempts to legislate against domestic violence.

2.12.2 Judicial Perspective in India

Kumar and Barwa (2017) provide a judicial account of domestic violence against women in India, emphasizing the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005. They say that even with so many rules put in place, awareness and enforcement remain huge problems. The stigma to which these legislative safeguards are used and to which victims are shunned adds to the challenge of their efficient application.

2.12.3 Broader European Framework

Following the broader European community approach, the 2011 Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence is analyzed by Caragnano (2018). The Convention has helped set up a vast, important legal framework ensuring the protection of women from all forms of abuse and the

promotion of gender equality. Caragnano points out that to combat domestic abuse, there needs to be global collaboration and consistent mores.

Consequently, comparative research on such legislation suggests a complex environment where legislation must address enforcement questions, gender dynamics, and cultural context. Although many nations have made considerable progress, these laws only work if they are uniformly enforced, victim-centered, and if the communication is clear. More research needs to be done to find creative solutions and best practices for protecting as well as supporting victims of domestic violence around the world.

2.13 Research Gap

Pakistan has taken an important legal initiative, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021, to address domestic violence. The research to date has been concerning global standards, cross-jurisdictional comparative analyses, and the broader social implications of domestic violence. On the contrary, though, the text of the Bill per se has been largely ignored in the absence of research looking at the language of the law.

Legal terminology is intricate, allowing many interpretations (Witczak-Plisiecka, 2006). In legal situations, it explains to us how relevant it is to communicate effectively to ensure that all parties concerned are aware of the message of the legislative texts intended since the enforcement of such texts is based on the complex language used in the text (Sibisi, 2023). In particular, we see this distinction in Pakistan, where linguistic and cultural diversity needs to be reflected in the domain of domestic violence employing clear and intelligible laws.

Research from Australia, South Africa, India, and other countries on the legal difficulties and achievement of anti-domestic violence imposes (Sibisi, 2023; Sunder Rajan, 2004; Nancarrow, 2019). They elaborate on how to combat different types of domestic violence and the legislative frameworks established to protect victims from different types of domestic violence. Despite this, there is a dearth of research studies that specifically state the link between the coherence and clarity of language of domestic violence legislation and their amenability and enforceability in Pakistan.

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses on protection orders and legal interventions (Cordier et al., 2021) also show the importance of scientific rigor in evaluating the efficacy of legislative measures. These assessments need to highlight, in countries like Pakistan, with a multi-cultural and culturally mixed population, how the law is intended to function and how it is slipping into practice.

For this reason, an exhaustive investigation of the language in Pakistan's Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021 is required. This study uses Relevance Theory to analyze Bill's text's efficacy, coherence, and clarity to close this conspicuous gap in the existing research. It aims to do this by providing practical recommendations for improving how the legal system in Pakistan deals with victims of domestic violence, expunging bloated legal language that obscures key legal language, and enabling the victim agency through pellucid, perspicuous legal instruments.

2.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has developed detailed considerations of past studies on domestic violence vis à vis its many aspects. The study started with a definition of domestic violence and the historical context of how society and law have changed in responding to such crimes. Analyzing domestic violence through a historical lens is important for making sense of this modern world we find ourselves in, both in dealing with the endemic nature of domestic violence and the difficult nature they face to combat it.

Next, the chapter examines the intricate relationship between domestic violence, law, and language. It looked at how definitions and terms of law are employed when dealing with domestic violence cases. Specifically, this section highlighted the importance of precise language in legislation, legal proceedings, and discourse perpetrated and challenged by the household's norms of responsibility and social violence.

In addition, the chapter summarized in detail the main studies related to the field. It explored different research methods and findings that highlight that domestic violence is multidimensional. In this review, the researcher has highlighted the previous research that was important from the point of view of themes and trends of literature, such as the prevalence of domestic violence and their relationship with the law.

Finally, a major research gap was identified, which needs further investigation. Given that the present body of literature, however, still leaves room for additional research in more sophisticated, nuanced, and diverse ways of understanding domestic violence experiences. This gap suggests that there continues to be much research needed to develop more effective and inclusive approaches to prevention and intervention and language and law. This chapter identifies the chasm by pinpointing this gap, thus planting the seeds of future research to fill this gap in developing our understanding of violence against women.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is a systematic work that enhances the stock of knowledge. The researcher's job is to go deep down into a phenomenon and try to solve problems. This section will explain the research design, data collection process, and tools. In addition to that, the research population, research sampling, research instruments, and theoretical framework will be explained.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is described by Kothari (2004) as "a conceptual structure which consists of the blueprint for data collection, measurement and analysis of data" (p. 31). Considering the study's objectives, the current research design employs a mixed-method approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data analysis to understand the subject matter comprehensively. For the qualitative data, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the bill, which enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding. The quantitative data helped the researcher gather quantifiable data from the practicing lawyers. Likert scale questionnaire helped quantify the otherwise qualitative data.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis contributed significantly to the study's successful conclusion. Qualitative data analysis provided a thorough and detailed examination of the Bill, enabling the researcher to undertake a detailed semantic and pragmatic analysis. This analysis further revealed the prevailing legislation's language, structure, and implications and provided nuanced differences between the legislation and respective legislative contexts. In contrast, the quantitative data analysis allowed for broad views from the participants regarding their opinions as experts. These methods combined strengthened the study's overall findings since the quantitative results calibrated and corroborated the inferences from the qualitative analysis. In response, a mixed-method approach was used to conduct a holistic and well-rounded investigation of the phenomenon studied while increasing the reliability and depth of the research.

3.2 Data Collection

The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods with a solid theoretical foundation in Relevance Theory. The chosen sample, the population, and the detailed data collection methods contribute to a robust and thorough exploration of the chosen subject matter.

The sample legislation chosen for analysis, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, was thoroughly read and re-read through the lens of four specific aspects outlined in its definition of 'Domestic Violence.' As specified on page 6 of the bill, these aspects serve as focal points in the questionnaires, ensuring a targeted and structured investigation.

Data collection involves qualitative content analysis by the researcher. Furthermore, Likert scale questionnaires were used to gather quantitative information. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected through questionnaires, a structured approach was adopted, emphasizing Internal Consistency Reliability and Content Validity. Content validity was established through expert consultation. A well-practiced lawyer from Lakki Marwat reviewed the questionnaire to ensure its readability and practical relevance. Additionally, a professor from NUML, Islamabad, provided linguistic refinement, while another faculty member from NUML, Islamabad, authenticated the questionnaire based on legal criteria.

To assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with 10 participants before full-scale data collection. The results were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.764 as shown in Figure 1. As Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.7 and 0.8 are generally considered acceptable, this indicates that the questionnaire items exhibit reasonable consistency and reliability for measuring the intended construct.

Furthermore, to ensure the accuracy of quantitative data, the questionnaire incorporated 5-scale Likert scale questions, allowing for standardized responses and enhancing measurement reliability. This rigorous methodological approach strengthens the credibility of the findings and ensures that the collected data is both trustworthy and methodologically sound.

Figure 1*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.764	44

3.3 Research Instruments

This study used self-administered questionnaires carefully designed to collect quantitative data as research instruments. Likert Scale questions were used on these questionnaires to elicit responses on a structured scale and facilitate quantitative analysis. The distribution of these questionnaires was guided by the criteria of convenience sampling, which is sometimes used in research studies because of the practicality and convenience it renders.

3.4 Research Population

Legal professionals, i.e., lawyers, constituted the research population. The legal character of the data being examined is also considered when selecting. Because of their specialized educational background, the lawyers were considered suitable to include because they already possessed practical experience in the legal field. Their knowledge and experience in legal principles and procedures enabled them to bring valuable perspectives and interpretations of the research area expressed in the subject matter. It was thus a deliberate choice of this population, which allowed an extremely rigorous scrutiny of the legal aspects involved and, thus, a rigorous and comprehensive analysis.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher has meticulously examined the chosen sample, focusing on lawyers as the primary participants. The targeted population for this study comprises 40 individuals from District Lakki Marwat and Islamabad, with a primary focus on lawyers. Convenience sampling was used as a sampling technique because there were not enough options. Some lawyers could not give the required time to the questionnaires

due to their busy schedules. A convenience sampling of practitioner lawyers might not impact the study because the sample was related to a similar profession.

Initially, a total of 80 questionnaires were distributed among 80 different individuals. However, some participants could not return their completed questionnaires for various reasons, including time constraints, personal commitments, or lack of interest in the study. Despite this, the responses from the 40 returned questionnaires provided sufficient data to carry out the analysis, ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings. A sample of 40 individuals was deemed representative of the target population. Efforts were made to minimize non-response bias by offering reminders and clarifications to participants during the data collection phase.

The selection of 40 lawyers as the representative sample for this study is based on their specialized knowledge and practical engagement with legal discourse. Lawyers possess an in-depth understanding of legal language, including its semantic and pragmatic implications, making them ideal participants for analyzing the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021. Their expertise enables them to interpret legal texts, identify ambiguities, and assess the effectiveness of legislative language in conveying legal intent and ensuring accessibility to the general public.

Furthermore, lawyers frequently interact with legal documents in professional settings, applying linguistic principles to argue cases, drafting legal texts, and interpret statutes. Their insights will provide valuable perspectives on how Bill's language aligns with principles of clarity, coherence, and relevance as framed within Relevance Theory. The choice of 40 participants ensures sufficient sample size to capture diverse professional experiences while maintaining manageability for qualitative and quantitative analysis.

This sample selection aligns with convenient sampling, as participants are chosen based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Since the research examines the intersection of law and language, lawyers—who are readily available and relevant to the study—provide valuable insights into the semantic and pragmatic features of the Bill. Their input helps ensure a practical and contextually informed analysis of its legislative efficacy.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher conducted a qualitative content analysis of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, to determine the linguistic nuances. After that, the data underwent analysis utilizing SPSS, a statistical software package for handling and analyzing data. Descriptive analysis, in the form of frequency distributions, was conducted to glean insights from the dataset. Independent t-tests were also carried out for each question. Tables were generated based on these analyses, serving as valuable tools for visualizing and interpreting the research findings. This approach allowed for identifying recurring themes and patterns within the qualitative data, enriching the overall research analysis and contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were ensured on various levels. While collecting data via questionnaires, respondents were asked if they could willingly give enough time to the questionnaires. Proper consent forms were given to the participants to acknowledge their willingness. Furthermore, no names or designations have been mentioned in the research or throughout the research process.

3.8 Theoretical Framework

Relevance Theory was put forward by Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber in 1986. It was developed in several stages, but the detailed version was published in *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* in 1986. It was updated several times, and this research work is based on the latest version, which appeared in 2002 (Wilson and Sperber, 2006, p. 608).

This theory was developed from the Grecian Maxim of relevance. Relevance theory stands on the Principle of Relevance, according to which, 'Human condition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. Wilson and Sperber (2006) claim that the relevance of the input or text will be maximum if the reader easily understands it. Similarly, relevance will decline if the target text is not understood correctly. The degree to which the reader understands the text is purely comparative (p. 609).

Relevance theory is a cognitive psychological theory that suggests testable predictions. Its claims can be tested indirectly when combined with descriptions of particular cognitive mechanisms. The Communicative Principle of Relevance is a law-like generalization that yields precise predictions when combined with descriptions of specific communicative acts. Relevance theory has been experimentally tested, and its predictions have been confirmed in various cases. It assumes that the actual or expected relevance of two inputs can often be compared, helping individuals allocate their cognitive resources, and communicators predict and influence cognitive processes.

3.8.1 Communicative Principle

Communication involves predicting and manipulating the mental states of others. When we use ostensive-inferential communication, we have an informative and communicative intention. The communicative intention is to inform the audience of our informative intention. This is achieved through an ostensive stimulus, which creates expectations of relevance. Using an ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its optimal relevance, making it the most relevant input compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

The presumption of optimal relevance theory states that an ostensive stimulus should be worth processing, easy to understand, and should communicate the speaker's intentions. The communicator can only produce the most relevant stimulus they are willing and able to offer. The theory also explains how silence can be used as an ostensive stimulus by implicating that the addressee is unable or unwilling to answer. In Grice's framework, unwillingness to provide the required information violates the Cooperative Principle.

Pragmatics involves inferring the speaker's meaning by resolving ambiguities, interpreting metaphors and ironies, and identifying implicatures. The Communicative Principle of Relevance suggests a practical procedure for performing these subtasks. The hearer should follow a path of least effort and stop when their expectations of relevance are satisfied. The first interpretation that satisfies the hearer's expectation of relevance is the one the speaker intended to convey.

As related to the context, for the issue at hand, the second or *communicative principle of relevance* says that every utterance conveys the information that it is:

- i. relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it. (If the utterance contained too few positive cognitive effects for the addressee concerning the processing effort needed to achieve these effects, he would not bother processing it, and the communicator need not have taken the trouble to utter it.)
- ii. the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences. (Otherwise, the communicator would have chosen a more relevant utterance – e.g., one that needs less processing effort and/or achieves more positive cognitive effects on the part of the addressee – to convey her meaning. After all, she wants to be understood quickly and reliably.) (Wilson and Sperber, 2006, p. 612)

3.8.2 Relevance and Comprehension

Non-verbal communication is limited to observable features of the environment, while verbal communication can convey a wide range of meanings through logical forms. Context-dependent aspects of explicit content are treated as equally inferential in relevance theory. The hearer aims to construct a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning that satisfies the presumption of relevance conveyed by the utterance.

The overall comprehension process involves constructing hypotheses about explicatures, implicated premises, and implicated conclusions. These subtasks are developed in parallel with expectations. Each subtask involves a non-demonstrative inference process.

Usually, most of the information conveyed by the utterance has to be inferred. The inference process is based on the decoded meaning, the addressee's knowledge and beliefs, the context, and the communicative principle of relevance guiding it.

- i. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (explicatures) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.
- ii. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (implicated premises).
- iii. Construct an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (implicated conclusions). (Wilson and Sperber, 2006, p. 615).

3.9 Framework for Analysis of the Data

A framework for data analysis refers to a structured approach or system used to examine and interpret collected data in a research study. It outlines the methods, tools, and procedures that transform raw data into meaningful information.

- In this study, the data is interpreted using the Relevance Theory by Wilson and Sperber, which prioritizes the interplay of language use and context.
- According to Relevance Theory, the relevance of a text increases if it is easy to understand and diminishes if it is difficult.
- Also, silence is interpreted as an indicator that the respondent is either unable or unwilling to respond. To capture similar nuances, the questionnaires have included a neutral option.
- Relevance theory considers the message's worth to the reader or the listener. When a message is encoded as clearly and as effectively as possible, it makes a message more relevant.
- The analysis links explicatures (explicit mention of information) and implied premises and conclusions, key aspects of grasping communication within Relevance Theory.
- According to Relevance theory, there can be multiple implicatures of an explicature.

The researcher analyzes the data by examining the range in detail. The language of Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021 is examined in detail; through a content analysis, an understanding of the text is achieved. The various provisions of the Bill guide the researcher regarding different forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual abuse. The foundation for the subsequent distribution and analysis of Likert scale questionnaires is gained from this initial content analysis. These questionnaires aim to explore the respondents' perspectives and see how Bill's provisions relate to their experiences.

The research seeks a holistic view of how the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021 is understood and its implication for preventing domestic violence through a synthesis of relevance theory and content analysis/survey method. This

framework provides a systematic and rigorous way of analyzing data that would provide meaningful insights or interpretations matching the study's objectives.

3.10 Rationale of Selection of Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory, proposed by Sperber and Wilson, provides a robust framework for understanding how individuals derive meaning in context, making it a compelling choice for analyzing the language of the *Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021*. Its focus on the interplay between linguistic expressions and contextual assumptions is particularly well-suited to the semantic-pragmatic study of legal discourse, where language interpretation can significantly affect the perception and implementation of laws.

3.10.1 Connection to Key Dimensions of Pragmatics

Relevance Theory is selected because of its compatibility with core dimensions of pragmatics, namely context, inference, and speaker-intended meaning, which are necessary for interpreting the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021. It posits that communication between individuals is encoded in linguistic forms and decoded by inferring speaker intent using contextual cues. This pragmatic insight is key to answering this study's research questions. Some other dimensions of pragmatics and their relation to Relevance Theory are elaborated below.

1. Contextual Meaning

Eragamreddy (2024) posits that context is vital in molding the meaning and that language is a means of communication fashioned by ‘cultural quirks’ (p. 1886). According to the theory, interlocutors rely on shared context to determine the relevance of linguistic input. In code-switching and code-mixing, speakers often draw on different linguistic repertoires to achieve optimal relevance in each context.

2. Inferential Communication

Pragmatics emphasizes the inferential nature of communication, where meaning is not solely encoded but also inferred by the listener. Relevance Theory explains this process through the principle of relevance, which governs how

speakers select linguistic forms that minimize effort while maximizing contextual effects.

3. Speaker Intentions and Hearer Interpretations

Eragamreddy (2024) asserts that pragmatics often involves how speakers' intentions are conveyed and interpreted (p. 1886). Relevance Theory explicates this through the distinction between explicature and implicature, offering a nuanced understanding of how multiple meanings are inferred based on different mental levels and contexts.

4. Cognitive Efficiency

According to LaPolla and Blakemore (1995), pragmatics is concerned with the efficiency of the message. The sender presupposes that the most efficient message the receiver or hearer can receive is the one the sender sends (p. 173). The Relevance Theory emphasizes cognitive efficiency in communication. For example, this is especially the case when speakers select linguistic structures to achieve communicative goals that further the desire to minimize cognitive effort, usually due to social, cultural, and linguistic factors.

3.10.2 Justification for Selecting Relevance Theory

This study applies Relevance Theory to bridge the gap between the linguistic structure of the Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Bill 2021 and its pragmatic implication in real-world applications. The theory enables us to decode explicit legal statements and explore how implicit meanings and contextual assumptions contribute to understanding domestic violence as a multidimensional phenomenon. This method guarantees a fine and complete analysis in accordance with the study's objectives.

3.11 Conclusion

The research methodology and theoretical framework utilized in the study are provided comprehensively in this chapter. It presents details of the sample and population targeted for the research and establishes requisite clarity about the demographics and characteristics of the participants. The chapter also elaborates on the methods and procedures of data analysis, ensuring that the methods used are correct to

get meaningful insights from the data. Also, the study's theoretical background is set, presenting some critical aspects of Relevance Theory. Subsequently, the theoretical principle is tightly linked to the data analysis framework, showing how theoretical notions direct real research activities.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter comprises the presentation and analysis of the data that has been collected. In data analysis, the researcher has applied qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods to analyze the relevance of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021 in the Pakistani context. Focusing on the objectives of this research, this chapter first deals with the possible interpretations of the Bill. Secondly, it deals with the interplay of context and the ground reality of Pakistan concerning the extent of relevance of the bill. The gathered data is examined following the theoretical framework chosen for the study, i.e., the Relevance Theory (RT). It is probably the first study in which the researcher has tried to analyze the Bill in the Pakistani context using Relevance Theory. This data analysis describes the standing of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021 in Pakistani social, cultural, and religious reality.

4.1 Content Analysis

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The following content analysis follows a qualitative analysis of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021. The analysis deals with four facets of abuse discussed in the Bill, i.e., physical abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, and sexual abuse.

4.1.1 Physical Abuse

Domestic violence in the Bill includes four types of abuse: physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, and economic. Physical abuse is the first to be defined, just after the definition of domestic violence. Physical abuse in the Bill is considered to mean ‘all the acts whereby physical harm is inflicted upon the vulnerable persons and includes all offenses under multiple chapters: XVI. XV I A, XVII, XX, X X A of the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XL V of 1860) ...’. The language of the definition is easy to understand and is inclusive when it says that it includes all acts that inflict physical harm. According to Relevance Theory, it is relevant on three basis. First, it talks in plain and easy-to-understand language, which makes it plain and entails minimum explicatures. Second, it talks about the relevant problems and issues prevalent in the country. Third, it is written as effectively as it could be. However,

Relevance Theory also states that an utterance is relevant when it is complete. The concerned definition does not follow this notion of the theory because it points out another document, namely the Pakistan Penal Code. However, it is also true that such inferences are indispensable because otherwise, the text would lose its coherence. This is also the style of legal language that points to various other texts.

One thing should be noted: language and practical application of the clause are two different things. All kinds of physical harm are considered domestic violence as per the definition of the Bill, but religious fractions consider it the right of a man to beat a woman (Khan, 2016). Furthermore, to legalize it, the Hadiths are narrated. Not all Muslims believe in this, but there is a certain degree of soft corner for some punishments.

[Court will] ensure that the aggrieved person is provided shelter in a safe place of residence if he or she so requires

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** The writer (court or legal document) encodes a directive that the court is responsible for providing shelter to the aggrieved person.
- **Decoding:** The reader (judge, lawyer, or public) decodes this as a legal requirement or obligation.

ii. **Context:**

- Legal context regarding domestic abuse or harassment cases.
- Situational context is when an individual seeks protection or relief from harm.

iii. **Inference:**

- The audience infers that the provision of shelter is contingent on the requirement of the aggrieved person.
- There is an implicit understanding that the court has the authority and means to provide such shelter.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- The court will provide shelter if the person needs it.

- The court will ensure the safety of the aggrieved by providing a residence.
- The provision is a protective measure against further harm.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- The aggrieved person requires protection.
- The court is responsible for the safety of individuals seeking legal protection.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- The legal system has measures to ensure the safety of individuals at risk.
- The court prioritizes the immediate safety and shelter of the aggrieved person.

Several instances of evaluating the clause of the Bill are considered. Upon closer inspection, the clause looks positive. It is well-written, easy to read, and applicable to the contemporary social environment. However, it will be problematic if the scenarios are rigidly defined.

One big problem is that the existing clause might end up stymieing the voice of the female victim. In some cases, the conditional nature of ("if") can be brought to bear to harm the position of the victim when the respondent is a person who holds a great deal of power or influence. The clause's protections could fail to do much since the victim's concerns find their assertions may be dismissed or ignored by the power imbalance.

Suppose the clause sets out what must happen for the victim to win his/her claim — for example, at least he/she should suffer sufficiently for the circumstances not to be compatible with intervening, effective public action. Such a situation may lead to the victim's voice relegation, thus making the clause mere lip service. Hence, the clause appears positive at first sight, but its misuse under certain circumstances should form the basis of proper addressing to ascertain whether it is effectively meant to be utilized.

Court may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;

- i. **Encoding and Decoding:**
 - **Encoding:** A conditional directive that the court may issue a protection order.
 - **Decoding:** The reader understands that the court has discretionary power to issue such orders.
- ii. **Context:**
 - Legal proceedings involving harassment or abuse.
 - Situations where proximity to the respondent poses a threat to the aggrieved person.
- iii. **Inference:**
 - The protection order is a legal tool to ensure the aggrieved person's safety.
 - Exceptions may apply depending on the specific circumstances.
- iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**
 - The court has the power to order the respondent to maintain distance.
 - The court's order can include specific exceptions.
 - Protection orders are aimed at preventing further harm.
- v. **Implicated Premises:**
 - The respondent poses a potential threat to the aggrieved person.
 - The court needs flexibility to tailor the order to the situation.
- vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**
 - Legal protection can be customized to suit the needs of the aggrieved.
 - The judicial system provides mechanisms to prevent harm through legally binding orders.

The clause above may be used if the respondent wants revenge and stays away from the aggrieved person for an extended time. In another scenario, the ego and temper of the defendant can fire up, given Pakistan's misogynistic and male-dominated society.

It is possible that the spirit of the clauses above is reversed, and positivity is maligned in negativity. If the definition of domestic violence and physical abuse is considered under an orthodox religious context, then it seems antithetical and ambiguous. This is why the Bill was opposed by the religious parties in the parliament because, according to them, the Bill was against the dictums of Islam.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, the offense under this section shall be cognizable, bailable, and compoundable.

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** A legal statement specifying the nature of an offense under this section.
- **Decoding:** The reader understands this offense has specific legal characteristics (cognizable, bailable, compoundable).

ii. **Context:**

- Legal definitions and classifications of offenses.
- Specific legal framework governing certain types of offenses.

iii. **Inference:**

- The offense can be reported and acted upon by police without a warrant (cognizable).
- The accused can be granted bail.
- The offense can be settled between parties (compoundable).

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- This offense does not require a warrant for arrest.
- Bail can be granted for this offense.
- The offense can be legally settled outside of court.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- The nature of the offense allows for immediate police intervention.

- The legal system provides for the possibility of bail.
- There is an option for out-of-court settlements.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- The legal framework for this offense is designed to be flexible and responsive.
- The system balances immediate action and the possibility of resolution outside the court.

Although all possible explicatures of the statements appear favorable, in Pakistani society, legal loopholes and the compoundable nature of the clause can be exploited. Explicatures, in linguistic terms, are the explicit meanings derived from a given statement, often assumed to be unambiguous. However, these seemingly straightforward interpretations can be manipulated where power dynamics and socio-economic disparities are pronounced.

If the respondent's party is influential and affluent, they may easily secure bail, as the bail amount is typically insignificant. This financial advantage allows them to navigate the legal system more effectively, undermining the intent of the clause. The term "bail" in this context, while linguistically denoting a temporary release based on a security deposit, transforms into a tool for the affluent to bypass legal repercussions.

In addition, the powerless, aggrieved party can be forced into compromise. Linguistically, a "compromise" implies a mutual agreement, but it is usually an imposition and often with coercion, which is especially likely when the power imbalances are great. There are many ways this coercion can occur: Social pressure, threats, or even financial incentives, which can make the victim settle out of court to lessen the strength of the clause.

This would allow the aggrieved party extra time to seek justice without being rushed into a potentially less-than-ideal settlement. Further, the bail system needs to be reformed so that a bail amount is not fixed but correlates with the respondent's wealth. A dramatic change in the legal landscape comes about when, as here, a 'fixed' bail system gives way to a 'relative' one — that is, a system that talks in terms of the legal

risk to each defendant. It ensures that the rich do not easily bypass the law, and bail is to ensure the respondent is present in court rather than being a formality.

These changes would help create a more equitable legal framework where the balance of power between the aggrieved and the respondent is more evenly distributed, thereby enhancing the clause's effectiveness and ensuring it serves its intended protective function. In this way, the language of the law can better align with its spirit, preventing the subversion of justice through linguistic and legal loopholes.

...to get the aggrieved person medically examined if the person has sustained bodily injuries and forward a copy of the medical report to the Protection Committee;

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** A directive for medical examination and reporting.
- **Decoding:** The reader/responder understands this as a procedural requirement following bodily injury.

ii. **Context:**

- Situations involving physical harm to an individual.
- Procedures for handling evidence of bodily injuries in legal cases.

iii. **Inference:**

- The aggrieved person's injuries need to be documented.
- The medical report is important for legal and protection purposes.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- The aggrieved person must be examined medically.
- The medical report is to be forwarded to the relevant committee.
- The examination and reporting are procedural steps in handling the case.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- The aggrieved person has sustained bodily injuries.
- Accurate medical documentation is necessary for further action.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- The legal process requires thorough documentation of injuries.
- Medical examinations are integral to the protection and legal resolution process.

The medical examination is another problematic place where an aggrieved person can be uncomfortable. The Supreme Court of Pakistan has deemed the two-finger test illegal, but it is still illegally practiced. It is an archaic method that causes pain and trauma to the victim. Besides, doctors are also a scarce resource. Far-flung areas having only male doctors make things worse for female victims.

4.1.2 Psychological Abuse

However, psychologically abusive abusers are not easily diagnosed and are often the least known or even acknowledged type of abuser. Psychological abuse does not leave deep and lasting scars on the flesh but in the mind and the soul. Psychological abuse pervades domestic relationships as a whole, and, in many ways, all other forms of violence within that relationship do.

However, the crucial question arises: Is psychological abuse duly considered a type of domestic violence? Unfortunately, in society, we tend not to focus on the psychological dimensions of domestic abuse. It starts with a lack of understanding and awareness and with entrenched societal norms united in their commitment to the display of visible forms of violence over the subtler, more insidious forms of manipulation and coercion.

Thus, the association of psychological violence with domestic violence in the Bill formulation marks a historic step. The Bill specifically acknowledges psychological abuse, filling a big and often overlooked hole in existing legislation and public awareness. This inclusion validates victims' experience but also adds weight to psychological abuse as a form of violence. Since Relevance Theory focuses on solving particular social issues, the Bill's consideration of psychological abuse is rightly germane and important.

Additionally, Bill's message and language ambiguity will only lead people to believe that psychological abuse is not serious. The wise inclusion of specific factors that may facilitate psychological abuse in defining psychological abuse. It could be a range of behaviors from manipulation, gaslighting, isolation, intimidation, and control.

With the Bill outlining these behaviors, it creates easier to define and address psychological abuse in a domestic setting.

However, to be effective, the bill also depends upon enforcing its provisions. There is no legal framework that can erase psychological abuse unless we work hand in hand to generate awareness and provide support for the victims as well as hold perpetrators to account. Furthermore, cultural and societal norms must change to believe and condemn any form of domestic violence, psychological included.

Finally, the inclusion of psychological violence within the definition of domestic violence in the Bill represents an important step forward towards addressing this too often ignored form of abuse. The Bill emphasizes how psychological abuse can have such a profound effect and offers a framework for identifying and intervening with psychological abuse in all domestic relationships. In the end, legislation that works and acceptance (or even just awareness) from all parts of our society are necessary to address psychological abuse and promote healthier, safer relationships.

While defining psychological abuse, the Bill included certain factors that may cause psychological abuse.

[psychological abuse includes] threats of divorce or second marriage on baseless accusation of insanity or infertility

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** Defining psychological abuse.
- **Decoding:** The reader understands specific actions constituting psychological abuse.

ii. **Context:**

- Legal definitions related to abuse.
- Social and cultural implications of threats involving marriage.

iii. **Inference:**

- Threats regarding divorce or a second marriage can be psychologically damaging.
- Accusations of insanity or infertility are recognized as forms of abuse.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- Psychological abuse involves threats related to marital status.
- Baseless accusations are recognized as harmful.
- The definition of abuse includes threats that undermine mental well-being.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- Psychological harm can be inflicted through threats and accusations.
- Social and cultural contexts make these threats particularly harmful.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- Legal definitions of abuse include psychological dimensions.
- The protection framework recognizes the impact of non-physical forms of abuse.

The linguistic challenges surrounding psychological abuse in legal documents, such as the Bill, are indeed significant and can lead to ambiguity and interpretation issues. One example of this complexity is evident in the statement above, particularly concerning the term "baseless."

The ambiguity arises from the unclear relationship between "baseless" and the preceding nouns "insanity" and "infertility." Is "baseless" meant to modify both "insanity" and "infertility," indicating that threats of divorce and second marriage are unwarranted in cases where the aggrieved person is insane or infertile? Or is "baseless" meant to stand alone, implying that threats of divorce and second marriage are unjustified regardless of the mental or physical condition of the aggrieved person?

This later interpretation provokes strong debate and demonstrates how linguistic and legal issues are mixed up. Standalone, if 'baseless' means that perceived threats of divorce or second marriage by the defendant are unfounded independent of that of the aggrieved person's mental or physical state. However, if it is used to adjust 'insanity, infertility,' it means that threats of divorce or remarriage are only unmerited in cases where the reason, therefore, is baseless.

This gives us a good indication of just how important it is to have precise language when dealing with such sensitive issues of psychological abuse in a legal document. Words can change the way that the law is interpreted and applied and, therefore, can have an impact on the rights that the law ensures are protected for victims of abuse.

Legal drafters have to be very attentive to paragraphing provisions relating to psychological abuse so that the language of the words is clear and consistent. Thus, definitions and guidelines in the law can also give clear definitions and guidelines for the law's intent to mitigate the ambiguity and ensure the law's intention is even implemented. There is a need for dialogue between legal professionals and policymakers to refine language and address potential ambiguities. Legal frameworks that prioritize linguistic clarity and precision will better safeguard people from psychological abuse and will ensure that they are addressed for their deeds.

[Psychological violence includes] bringing false allegation upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household;

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** Specifying actions that constitute psychological violence.
- **Decoding:** The reader understands that false allegations are a form of psychological violence.

ii. **Context:**

- Legal and social understanding of psychological harm.
- Importance of character and reputation in a shared household.

iii. **Inference:**

- False allegations can cause significant psychological distress.
- The legal framework acknowledges the harm caused by such actions.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- Psychological violence includes false accusations.
- Harm to character is recognized as a severe issue.

- The definition of violence encompasses non-physical actions.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- Psychological well-being can be severely affected by false allegations.
- The legal system includes provisions for protecting against psychological harm.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- Legal definitions of violence are broad and include psychological aspects.
- Protecting character and reputation is an essential aspect of legal protection.

Similar is the case with the clause above. The center of contention is the underlined word ‘false.’ It would mean that the respondent has a free hand in bringing true allegations upon the character of the aggrieved person. It is true that if there is any reality in the allegations, then the respondent will raise his/her concerns, but giving an open hand to the accused can be detrimental to the mental health of the aggrieved. According to relevance theory, there can be multiple conflicting interpretations, which makes clauses like these less relevant. First, the above two clauses are unclear. Second, both are prone to equally powerful but conflicting explicatures, which may lead to unhealthy implicatures in the court of law.

Court may pass a protection order in favor of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** A conditional directive about issuing protection orders.
- **Decoding:** The reader understands the court’s discretionary power to issue orders.

ii. **Context:**

- Legal proceedings concerning abuse or harassment.
- Situational necessity for protection from the respondent.

iii. **Inference:**

- Protection orders aim to prevent further harm.
- The court has flexibility in specifying the conditions of the order.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- The court can order the respondent to stay away.
- The order can have exceptions based on circumstances.
- Protection orders are preventative measures.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- The respondent poses a threat to the aggrieved person.
- Legal orders are tools for ensuring safety.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- The court system prioritizes safety and protection.
- Flexibility in orders allows for tailored legal solutions.

The Bill facilitates the victims in the trial proceedings, medical examination, and protection. Nevertheless, given Pakistan's faulty and tiresome judicial system, in reality, the trial proves to be mental agony for the aggrieved person. In his encounter with various lawyers, the researcher noted that the reality of Pakistani courts is a far cry from the fabled court being projected in the Bill. The language of the Bill is correct, but if it is achievable and applicable in Pakistan, it is a real issue. Calling names is not frowned upon, and it is expected from the woman to keep quiet and bear the worst for her well-being and her family's honor. All these instances are not dismal for the quality or relevance of the Bill because it tries to eliminate all these vices. Philosophically, the relevance of the Bill will diminish when it fails to uphold the dictums it professes in its clauses.

An important practical issue of the above example is how the clauses of psychological abuse are applied in Pakistani society. The attempt to direct the respondent to have no contact with the aggrieved person is laudable, but unforeseen consequences may arise in a society entrenched in chauvinistic norms. For example, a

respondent may use this directive to hold a grudge by lingering in this person's absence for extended periods and exacerbating his victimization. Additionally, in a male-centered culture, which often synchs up notions of control and dominance, the directive could create an overresponse that manifests as aggressive and violent behavior.

Likewise, as discussed on page 7 of the Bill, staring, stalking, name-calling, over-possessive, and jealousy are all forms of psychological abuse. The increased emphasis that is typically placed on these abstract and often overlooked behaviors as indicators of abuse also raises many questions. They do not leave easily quantifiable marks like physical abuse, and for that reason, they are harder to quantify. For example, you need corroborating witnesses or evidence to show over-possessiveness or jealousy to prove it in a court of law.

Furthermore, Bill's definition of abusive behavior, which includes over-possessiveness, may be interpreted differently in different cultures. The definitions of such things as over-possession are universal, but in some societies, over-possession might be seen as a sign of care and affection rather than abuse, which makes it hard to apply such things to other societies.

Although such challenges exist, the addition of these behaviors of psychological abuse to the definition of this concept is in line with Relevance Theory, where clear societal issues must be addressed. By accepting the subtle but damaging manifestations of abuse in Pakistani society, the Bill seeks to acknowledge and combat these various real and psychological abuses taking place today in Pakistani society. Also, the clarity of Bill's language is valuable in helping to spread awareness and understanding of domestic violence dynamics.

Despite this, the Bill works only as long as it is put into action and enforced, particularly by the Pakistani still badly flawed judicial system. In practice, however, a trial can be mentally exhausting for people who have been aggrieved because of long proceedings, little legal representation, and prevailing social norms that dissuade victims from speaking out about abuse. In addition, many cultural expectations require women to remain silent when name-called abused, so combating this violence is even harder.

The Bill is ultimately an important step in pursuing an end to domestic violence and the protection of victims' rights, but only insofar as it is translated from these principles to real improvements for those who are abused. The Bill will likely become relevant and effective only if the legislation affects positive societal change through sweeping measures to enforce its provisions effectively.

4.1.3 Economic Abuse

Placing so much stress on economic abuse in the Bill shows that it is a top priority as a type of domestic violence that is insidious and pervasive. The monetary relief section of page 9 of the Bill is dedicated to economic abuse specifically and is seen as a separate and very important issue.

Economic abuse is especially harmful because its impact tends to strike at the very root of people's ability for self-sufficiency and well-being. Decision power and autonomy are socially structured by the availability of financial resources in many households. Aggrieved persons, particularly women, mostly ignore and are not included in household dynamics without adequate economic backing.

However, commentary on the clauses concerning economic abuse in the Bill is necessary to give an elaborate view of the various angles of this kind of abuse. Types of economic abuse can be the control of access to financial resources, withholding income, sabotaging employment opportunities, or coercing financial dependence. The commentary affords greater insight to victims into the nature of economic abuse and its effect through a more nuanced understanding of this, with its link to the high level of domestic abuse.

That is a really important step in including the economic aspect of domestic abuse by putting a separate section on monetary relief in the Bill. This section recognizes that economic empowerment is important for victims and offers practical ways to rectify the other economic damage done to victims. The Bill prioritizes monetary relief to ease the economic barriers that can prevent the victims of abuse from breaking away from those situations and beginning to rebuild their lives on their own.

Monetary relief also fits in with broader measures to facilitate gender equality and bring marginalized people out of relative invisibility. Empowerment of victims of domestic violence is at the core of the economic empowerment that allows such victims

to exercise their rights, make informed choices, and escape the cycle of abuse. Adopting the Bill to address economic abuse head-on will result in a fairer and more just society for all people, with all getting equal rights to access resources and opportunities.

The commentary on the clauses is as follows.

“economic abuse” includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which the aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** Defining economic abuse.
- **Decoding:** The reader understands the specific acts that constitute economic abuse.

ii. **Context:**

- Legal definitions related to abuse.
- Economic dependence and rights under law or custom.

iii. **Inference:**

- Depriving someone of economic resources is a form of abuse.
- Legal entitlements to resources must be protected.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- Economic abuse involves restricting access to financial resources.
- The aggrieved person is entitled to certain resources.
- The definition of abuse includes economic dimensions.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- Financial control can be a form of abuse.
- Economic independence and access are legal rights.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- The legal system recognizes and protects against economic abuse.
- Ensuring access to financial resources is part of the protection framework.

The Bill's definition of economic abuse is quite inclusive, especially in the term 'any law or custom.' The provision provides that the aggrieved person has access to resources as law-designated or as provided by societal customs. This expands the ambit of the Bill and accepts the varied forms in which economic abuse may be perpetrated in different cultural contexts. Second, it makes a Bill more applicable and effective because it is relevant to society's customs and traditions.

Although the definition is interesting, the definition has problems and contentions. The word intentional might be a problem since it potentially includes it. However, that qualifier means that economic abuse has to be done with malicious intent, a difficult standard to apply in some situations. For example, suppose the respondent can demonstrate that their actions were involuntary or done without knowledge of the detrimental effects such actions are capable of making.

Furthermore, intention in the court of law is notoriously difficult to prove, as it is subjective and unobservable. It could cause a multiplicity of contradicting interpretations of the definition from the parties' point of view. With this, the definition is less relevant and effective in regulating cases where the perpetrator's intent is unclear.

From a linguistic point of view, the word 'intentional' adds a layer of complexity and, to no less of a degree, subjectivity. Indeed, it calls into question the burden of proof and what is required to establish the intent in legal proceedings. In addition, translating legal concepts into concrete, actionable definitions in practice is difficult since the process can often only yield partial progress.

The definition of economic abuse in the Bill attempts to address a very important problem but does so using a concept that needs to be perfected. As we refine and improve language in the Bill, we balance the need for clarity and specificity with another recognition: the nuanced nature of abusive behaviors.

[Court may pass an order] restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the household;

- i. **Encoding and Decoding:**
 - **Encoding:** A directive to restrain the respondent from disturbing possession.
 - **Decoding:** The reader understands this as a legal order to protect the aggrieved person's possession.
- ii. **Context:**
 - Legal protection in cases of domestic disputes.
 - Importance of securing living arrangements for the aggrieved.
- iii. **Inference:**
 - The court can prevent the respondent from disrupting the aggrieved person's living situation.
 - The order aims to maintain stability and safety in the household.
- iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**
 - The court can issue orders to protect household possessions.
 - Dispossession and disturbance are recognized as harmful actions.
 - The legal order seeks to ensure uninterrupted possession.
- v. **Implicated Premises:**
 - Disturbance of possession can cause harm and instability.
 - The aggrieved person has a right to secure living arrangements.
- vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**
 - Legal protections include maintaining household stability.
 - The court can issue orders to prevent dispossession and disturbance.

The above clause protects the aggrieved person from being dispossessed by the Defendant within the household setting. In the domain of Pakistani society, where such clauses are significant in undermining the predominant lack of male dominance, it becomes important to provide a solution to a major problem and help protect the

vulnerable. Linguistically, it is all about the clause being clear and strong in its overt meaning and implicit intent.

The explicit meaning of the clause is clear: It forbids the defendant from unlawfully dispossessing (removing the possession of) the aggrieved person in the household. It is this clarity that's needed so that everyone involved can communicate and understand the protections that have been intended.

Nevertheless, the strength of the clause lies in its implied intent or impliedly. Without mentioning it, the clause appears to say that the country is committed to eradicating gender-based power dynamics and protecting the boys of the society. The implicature gives an addition to the clause, adding depth and significance to the clause. The clause has a broader societal implication that is not implied by its literal meaning.

The clause has clarity and relevance, but it depends on its proper application and enforcement to be effective. In some orthodox households or cultural contexts, the clause may be resisted or challenged, so misuse or misinterpretation might occur. This underpins the need for careful consideration of linguistic and cultural differences when framing legal provisions so that they are applicable and effective.

In addition, the clause's inherent value and positive intent do not diminish the possibility that the clause could be misused or misinterpreted. Like any legal text, it can be manipulated or exploited for a purpose by any individual wanting to subvert its spirit. However, such misuse should not mean the Bill was not intended to address systemic violations of domestic violence and to advance gender equality and justice.

Finally, although the clause mentioned above is an encouraging development for protecting the rights of aggrieved persons within the household, its success depends on how it is understood and implemented under Pakistani society's cultural and legal realm. By paying attention to the nuances of linguistics, lawmakers can frame relevant laws and resultantly sort problems related to domestic violence and gender inequality.

[Court may pass an order] directing the respondent to secure alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or, if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** A directive for securing accommodation or paying rent.

- **Decoding:** The reader understands this as a legal order for ensuring alternative living arrangements.

ii. **Context:**

- Situations where the aggrieved person needs new accommodation.
- Legal mechanisms to ensure the respondent provides or pays for such accommodation.

iii. **Inference:**

- The respondent may be required to secure or pay for alternative housing.
- This provision is for the safety and well-being of the aggrieved person.

iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**

- The court can direct the respondent to provide new housing.
- Paying rent is an alternative to securing accommodation.
- The directive depends on the circumstances.

v. **Implicated Premises:**

- Alternative accommodation may be necessary for safety.
- The respondent has a responsibility to provide or pay for housing.

vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**

- Legal measures ensure that the aggrieved person has a safe place to live.
- The court can impose financial responsibilities on the respondent.

This discussed clause is a clear and understandable line to protect aggrieved individuals in homes. However, the underlined words 'or if the circumstances so require' are an issue with the clause because they lead to the possibility of ambiguity. The ambiguity comes from the ambiguity of whether these things mean the need for individual asylum or the inability of the aggrieved individual to pay rent. Two explicatures are presented, complicating the understanding and applicability of the clause and making it inapplicable in some cases.

From a linguistic perspective, ambiguous language can hinder the effectiveness and clarity of legal provisions. In this case, the ambiguity surrounding the underlined phrase may lead to divergent interpretations and contradictory implications, undermining the intended protections of the clause.

Implementing legal protection against economic abuse is hindered by deep-rooted socio-cultural and religious norms on gender roles and economic control. Additionally, this interpretation of religious texts can add legal backing to practices that further enslave households to economic coercion and control.

Though these problems exist, the Bill is truly a ground-breaking development in legal systems and the social systems of considerations surrounding domestic violence and historically held gender prejudices. The Bill shakes up deeply engrained societal norms by addressing economic abuse and challenging it, as well as promoting gender equality.

However, the practical implications of the judicial system of Pakistan deter the effective implementation of the Bill's provisions. Translating these human rights into law domestically has often meant long proceedings and scarce resources in the face of already complex and resource-constrained cases of domestic violence, most often resulting in harm toward victims of marginalized backgrounds. The long and tortuous legal process makes the already tall order for aggrieved people to bring their cases and instigate more impunity for the perpetrators even more difficult.

Finally, while the Bill establishes crucial operating procedures and protections for victims of domestic violence, the linguistic fuzziness and real-world difficulties of its implementation demonstrate the difficulty in addressing systemic issues of gender-based violence. To make progress, efforts must be made in both the legal framework and broader societal change, with investments also in resources and support services for victims, especially those from marginalized communities. Zero progress can be made in ending domestic violence and gender equality in Pakistan unless we work together at various levels.

4.1.4 Sexual Abuse

Introducing the concept of sexual abuse into the definition of domestic violence in the Bill is a considerable and worthy step taken to deal with a long-prevailing taboo

in Pakistani society. The fact that sexual abuse is considered a form of domestic violence in a society where talking and even discussing sex is shunned and stigmatized is a big and beneficial recognition (it is actually to be found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) that sexual abuse is pervasive and severe.

Although the Bill does not devote itself to discussing sexual abuse in much detail or have a whole section on it, its appearance in the same breath as other forms of abuse serves to indicate that it deserves equal or at least similar importance. To integrate sexual abuse into the wider set of forms of abuse that comprise domestic violence, the Bill acknowledges that different forms of abuse are interrelated and require comprehensive responses for remedying them.

The Bill has taken a holistic course of action to address all forms of abuse within the language of domestic violence and has not focused on a separate section on sexual abuse. The Bill does not separate different types of abuse but recognizes that domestic violence is a complex and intersecting issue at times involving multiple forms of abuse.

Moreover, the fact that sexual abuse has been incorporated into the Bill is a manifestation of the fact that it is time to challenge attitudes about sexuality as well as gender and sexual-based violence. In bringing sexual abuse out of the shadows and into the public realm, the Bill helps confront the taboo of sexual abuse and the silence and stigma that so often accompanies talk about sexual violence.

Nevertheless, the Bill includes sexual abuse, which is the right step to addressing the root causes and the systemic barriers that enable sexual violence to take place in Pakistani society. It involves challenging patriarchal mindsets, bolstering access to support services for survivors, and hardening legal support and enforcement mechanisms to battle sexual abuse.

"sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise violates the dignity of the vulnerable person or any other person;

i. **Encoding and Decoding:**

- **Encoding:** Defining sexual abuse.

- **Decoding:** The reader understands specific actions that constitute sexual abuse.
- ii. **Context:**
- Legal definitions related to abuse.
 - Recognition of the impact of sexual misconduct.
- iii. **Inference:**
- Sexual abuse involves actions that harm dignity and well-being.
 - The definition covers a range of degrading or humiliating behaviors.
- iv. **Multiple Possible Explicatures:**
- Sexual abuse includes conduct that degrades or humiliates.
 - The focus is on the impact on the victim's dignity.
 - The definition applies to vulnerable persons and others.
- v. **Implicated Premises:**
- Sexual misconduct can have severe psychological impacts.
 - Protecting dignity is a key aspect of legal definitions of abuse.
- vi. **Implicated Conclusions:**
- Legal protections against sexual abuse are comprehensive.
 - Ensuring dignity and well-being is central to the legal framework.

The definition of sexual abuse outlined in the Bill is characterized by its inclusivity and clarity, making it relevant according to Relevance Theory. In Pakistani society, where discussions about sex are often taboo and considered private matters, the definition opens the possibility for sex to be recognized as a form of violence. This denotes an acknowledgment of the fact that sexual abuse cannot be ignored as an issue in the case of domestic violence.

The definition, however, that uses the phrase 'any conduct' from a linguistic point of view is such that all acts of violence that fail to offend the dignity of the vulnerable person are understood within it. By including the phrase 'of any other

person,' it expands the scope to include not only women and children but any gender and strips the gender stereotype that sexual violence is confined only to women and children. For inclusivity, all of this linguistic nuance is important to acknowledge that survivors of sexual abuse have different experiences.

Furthermore, the assumption that only traditionally vulnerable people are vulnerable to sexual violence is extinguished by the contrast between a vulnerable person and every other person within the definition. The fact that sexual abuse in this linguistic distinction must be acknowledged and addressed as a pervasive issue and that it can affect anyone, and gender, race, and socioeconomic status make it important.

The concern of the Bill for institutions that have failed to provide the aggrieved person with access to medical care, particularly in cases of sexual abuse, is reflected in the provision of the Bill to the respondent to pay the aggrieved person's medical expenses. This provision has been made in Pakistan, where, in some cases, the payment of medical expenses is at the mercy of the defendant and their family, so this provision takes care of the aggrieved person's rights and that they do not have to bear any financial burden in this regard.

However, as the Supreme Court of Pakistan nullified the two-finger test in 2021, the progress should not be misinterpreted to mean the sections of the Bill relating to medical examination have been nullified. This alerts the community on the significance of language in legal documents.

Finally, the Bill's definitions and provisions constitute lexical means to tackle sexual abuse in Pakistani society and to achieve gender equality. This Bill also recognizes that sexual abuse is violence and requires that survivors of domestic violence have access to medical care.

4.2 Findings of Qualitative Data Analysis

The Bill's language recognizes multiple forms of abuse—physical, psychological, economic, and sexual—each linguistically framed to encapsulate unique and contextual interpretations of domestic violence.

- i. The study finds that all acts inflicting physical harm are defined as physical abuse. The language is filled with jargon and can be difficult to comprehend. This ambiguity decreases the linguistic relevance. The

clauses rely on the external source of Pakistan's Penal Code, reducing the optimal relevance and maximizing the decoding process. Cultural and religious interpretations within the society of Pakistan, where physical discipline is sometimes seen as acceptable, can also shape the perception and implementation of physical abuse under the law.

- ii. The Bill's language comprehensively includes psychological abuse, which is welcoming as it is the root cause of emotional distress. This inclusion takes relevance theory into account insofar as the subtle and culturally sensitive nature of psychological abuse is often overlooked or misinterpreted. The study finds that phrases like 'threats of divorce' and 'false allegations of character' are ambiguous and culturally charged and can be interpreted in different ways. The definition of the Bill includes threats and accusations, and in the case of terms like 'baseless' reference to threats of divorce or remarriage, this ambiguity shows that interpretation is not easy. Multiple strong interpretations are against the notion of relevance as they require more cognitive processing and make decoding difficult.
- iii. While the Bill's use of the terminology around psychological abuse is thorough, culturally sensitive terms such as 'jealousy' and 'over possessiveness' mean that this can be interpreted in different ways. Interpretive accessibility is stressed by Relevance Theory, but the judicial application of these terms may be influenced by cultural variability in understanding them, especially in conservative societies where behaviors may be differently understood. The difference could lead to their application or even latitude of psychological abuse.
- iv. The Bill specifically includes economic abuse, which is an important but often overlooked part of abusive behavior. The Bill's definition of economic abuse is unambiguous, but linguistic challenges, including the requirement to prove 'intentional deprivation,' make it difficult to understand and apply in law. Although the definition is simple, in practice, economic control may be culturally embedded and unrecognized as abuse in some communities. The problem arises when the question of gauging intention comes into force. Nevertheless,

Relevance Theory would suggest that this precision in language may be undermined if the intent behind some actions is contested in court. As a result, the inherent interpretative challenges could make proving economic abuse difficult. Even though there are such difficulties, this provision helps to bring into societal consciousness that financial control is a form of abuse and its effects on autonomy are harmful.

- v. Domestic violence is also understood to contain sexual abuse, especially in a society where speaking about sexuality is often considered taboo, and this is a very important point. Linguistically, the Bill is extensive in the sense that it broadly defines sexual abuse as ‘any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, or degrades.’ The definition is inclusive and relevant to Pakistani society. That interpretation promotes an increase in judicial acknowledgment of sexual misconduct within domestic relations and an increase in societal recognition and condemnation of sexual abuse. However, the term “any conduct” leads to varying degrees of interpretation, reducing the linguistic relevance of the definition. According to relevance theory, the message should be complete and clear.
- vi. As per Relevance Theory, linguistic inclusion of terms like “dignity” and “vulnerable person” provide societal significance. However, it poses the challenge to give proper meaning to such words. On top of this, the linguistic clarity and relevance of the language used to encourage societal recognition of sexual violence only compounds the problem by introducing an additional layer of cultural hesitance actually to enforce such language.

4.3 Conclusion

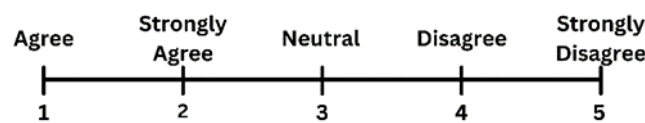
The Bill speaks of physical, psychological, economic, and sexual aspects of domestic violence in its language. The language of the Bill is not easy to understand per se as it is condensed with meanings and requires external sources to unravel the true potential, reducing the linguistic relevance of the Bill. Nevertheless, the Bill talks about the prevalent issues of Pakistani society, making it context-rich and, thus, relevant to

Pakistan. Interpretation of this Bill is culturally rooted in its differences, and there is a need for correct language to ensure that its application and effectiveness are precise.

4.4 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data was collected via Likert-Scale questionnaires and distributed among the lawyers. The questionnaire had five parts, i.e., general, physical abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, and conclusion.

Figure 2



4.4.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is perhaps the most well-known type of domestic violence due to its visible and immediate impact. Table 1 (which includes corporal punishment as a form of physical abuse) reveals somewhat bifurcated responses, but the legislative bill in question is pertinent for two main reasons. First, it addresses a societal reality, acknowledging the prevalence of such behaviors. Second, it supports the notion that corporal punishment should indeed be considered a form of physical abuse. The division in responses might indicate the various socio-religious dynamics at play.

Table 1 summarizes respondents' views on corporal punishment, especially in religious contexts. Some Islamic injunctions have been interpreted to allow a husband to beat his wife or wives lightly. Unlike in more developed countries, in Pakistan, beating or corporal punishment is still often seen as a method of discipline and improvement. The statistical mean 2.700, close to a neutral stance, signifies considerable uncertainty or ambivalence among respondents. The standard deviation of 1.3625 suggests that most participants agree with the proposition that corporal punishment should be considered physical abuse. This reflects the diverse and multifaceted narratives present in the country, influenced by its cultural, religious, and social diversity.

The responses were bifurcated, possibly due to differences in beliefs and values held by differing population segments. For some, corporal punishment is a tradition; for others, it is an outdated and abusive discipline. A range of opinions is expressed, many saying corporal punishment is physical abuse, while a considerable amount do not agree.

Table 1, overall, shows how to deal with corporal punishment in a framework of great complexity and challenge of domestic violence in Pakistan. This demonstrates the necessity for continuing dialogue and education between traditional practice and current human rights and personal dignity pedigrees.

Table 1

Given Pakistan's socio-religious context, corporal punishment is considered the right of the husband or male guardian.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
	Agree	8	20.0	20.0	47.5
	Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	62.5
	Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	92.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3625</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.700</i>	

Table 2 standardizes societal understanding of physical abuse, thus establishing the relevance of the Bill. Adding all the forms of harm due to physical harm to the ambit

of physical abuse, the Bill well covers various forms of domestic violence in its sections and clauses. The data also reveals this inclusive approach with a mean response of 2.150 and a standard deviation of 1.1220.

The average response of 2.150 indicates that participants are, for the most part, close to the neutral point on the scale, which is taken to imply a consensus or acceptance that all forms of physical harm should properly be categorized as physical abuse. This near-neutral mean also does not mean that they all agree. However, such near-neutral means reflect some uncertainty or ambivalence among the respondents. It may be ambivalent due to various personal experiences and social norms that inform people how to view physical abuse.

The moderate variability of the responses (standard deviation = 1.1220) is captured when all the responses are standardized. The variability in this suggests that, while many participants agree with the basic idea that all physical harm is physical abuse, there is a lot that remains open to interpretation. The difference may arise due to differences in cultural, social, or religious beliefs or personal experience of such violence in the cases of domestic violence.

It could be considered a good thing that some do not agree with the Bill's substance, giving us a chance to air out domestic violence issues that are not always noticed. These dissenting voices are a call for a more extensive understanding and a more all-encompassing approach to domestic violence and to understand that domestic violence is not limited to physical harm but includes all kinds of abuse.

The Bill is very specific in the language that all physical harm is physical abuse. This unequivocal definition is designed to force no ambiguity; every form of physical harm would be legally recognized as abuse. The Bill aims to set a strong baseline to prevent any kind of physical harm, and in doing so, it calls for an end to all physical violence — no matter what the circumstance — within the confines of homes.

Table 2

All types of physical harm are considered as “physical abuse” in Pakistan’s socio-cultural and religious context.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	67.5
	Neutral	7	17.5	17.5	85.0
	Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	97.5
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1220</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.150</i>	

However, Bill's language can sometimes be interpreted as favoring the defendant. For example, Table 3 shows that certain offenses' cognizable and bailable nature might be used against the aggrieved person, especially in cases involving affluent defendants. Most participants believe that the given clause may help the alleged aggressor. This issue highlights how language and societal dynamics influence interpretations.

The mean of 2.375 indicates that, on average, participants lean towards the view that Bill’s language could be read as favoring defendants more than it protects victims. This means that respondents tended to suspect there would be prospects for the affluent or the powerful to take advantage of the legal provisions.

This standard deviation of 1.3716 represents a good deal of variability in the responses, as many participants, though appreciative of the concern embodiment brings

to the Bill, have very different concerns in its language, and those concerns strain a wide spectrum range. The responses to this question vary because respondents at different levels have different knowledge of legal terminologies, personal experiences with the justice system, and different socio-economic backgrounds.

In this context, the linguistic aspect of the Bill is important. Legal language often uses complicated and convoluted words that can have different meanings. For example, the terms "cognizable offence" and "bailable offence" are subject to proper definitions, but in practice, their meaning varies. A cognizable offence means that police can arrest without a warrant and initiate an investigation without a court order for such offenses to run smoothly and make fast arrests. Nevertheless, it also allows for easy freedom of suspects on bail – and quickly – depending on whether they can afford it. This rapid release can very quickly create an injustice for victims and can expose them to additional harm or intimidation.

Interpretation of the clause is influenced heavily by societal dynamics. Indeed, in such societies, wealthy defendants in the legal system can be expected to be more navigated and manipulated. It can lead to a situation where we use the language of the law to protect and bend and to perpetuate inequities.

The second most common response, that of 2.375, implies that there is little confidence in the Bill's capability to defend effectively an aggrieved person. 1. 3716 variance indicates diversity in the opinion of this issue. Some participants might have had personal or witnessed experiences in which legal language has not protected victims, and others might trust the system to do so with equity.

Table 3

Affluent respondents are more likely to get away with their offenses than less affluent respondents due to the ‘bailable and compoundable’ nature of the given clause.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, the offence under this section shall be cognizable, bailable and compoundable.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Agree	10	25.0	25.0	62.5
	Neutral	2	5.0	5.0	67.5
	Disagree	11	27.5	27.5	95.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3716</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.375</i>	

The language of the Bill may be ambiguous regarding some archaic practices, such as the two-finger test. Despite the Supreme Court of Pakistan nullifying this test, some respondents, as shown in Table 4, believe that specific clauses in the Bill could still be interpreted to allow its practice. The respondents are highly divided on this statement, highlighting the complexities and realities of Pakistani society, where influence and money can significantly impact the interpretation and application of laws.

The mean response of 2.550 suggests that, on average, participants are somewhat neutral but leaning towards agreement with the concern that the Bill's

language could permit the continuation of outdated practices like the two-finger test. That mean value suggests that many respondents perceive potential ambiguities in the bill that might be exploited. The proximity of this mean to the neutral point indicates great uncertainty and mixed feelings among the participants regarding whether the Bill prohibits such practices unequivocally.

A large area of response spread is reflected in the standard deviation of 1.4133, meaning the participants have a wide range of opinions. There is so much variability in how some respondents think the Bill can be interpreted in ways that can facilitate harmful practices and how other respondents are confident that the provisions will be such that they cannot be misinterpreted to allow those practices. This broad spectrum of views is likely due to the respondents' diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

On the one hand, the respondents' responses show social divisions that reflect wider dynamics in Pakistani society. Legal interpretation and enforcement are heavily confounded by socioeconomic status, and those with more resources and influence tend to maneuver and exploit the rule from their end. The extent of this dynamic is seen in the discrepancy in reactions to the Bill's provisions, with some participants most immediately aware of, or perhaps having heard or felt, how the language of the law can be done or even bypassed by the rich and powerful.

Table 4

The given clause gives space to archaic medical tests like a two-finger test.

...to get the aggrieved person medically examined if the person has sustained bodily injuries and forward a copy or the medical report to the Protection Committee;

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Agree	4	10.0	10.0	47.5

Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	67.5
Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	92.5
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.4133</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.550</i>	

Some perceive the statements in Table 5 and Table 6 as potentially harmful to the aggrieved person. The concern lies not in the semantic or syntactic construction of these statements but in their practical application within Pakistan's judicial system, which has loopholes that powerful individuals can exploit.

Table 5 shows a mean response of 2.300, with a standard deviation of 1.1140. This means slightly leaning towards agreement that the clause might be used against the aggrieved person. Although it is close to neutral, it suggests that some respondents believe there is potential for misuse. The relatively low standard deviation indicates a more consistent opinion among respondents about this clause. The concern here is that, in practice, the provision of shelter might be inadequate or manipulated to disadvantage the aggrieved person, especially if the respondent has significant influence or resources.

The mean response in Table 6 is 2.650, with a standard deviation of 1.2720. Their average suggests a greater inclination towards agreement that the clause can be used against the aggrieved person than Table 5. Respondents were more concerned about the potential misuse of protection orders if the mean value was higher. In other words, more experienced and idealistic lawyers have more response variability or variance around their numbers, with a standard deviation of 1.2720.

The language of these statements is not the problem—it is how they are applied in the real world. The intended safeguards of the Bill can be defeated by the lack of immunity for those who avail themselves of the privilege granted to them under

Pakistan's judicial system, which is vulnerable to influence and manipulation. An example of this would be that shelter in a safe place while providing a welfare service can be made ineffective if it is not up to standard, and in the same way, the process can be delayed to leave the aggrieved person vulnerable. A theoretically strong protection order is similarly likely to be weakly enforced or to allow powerful respondents to flout exceptions and continue their abusive behavior.

Given that the society in which we live is a male-dominated one, these legal protections are not easy to enforce. It is a cultural norm and societal construct that's typically designed for men to win and that favors women and other vulnerable people to battle for them to win the protection and support they need. Strong respondents can use their clout within the judicial system to take advantage of how they use protective measures to oppress further.

The varied responses from lawyers highlight the different experiences and levels of trust in the judicial system. Some may have witnessed the effective implementation of these protective measures, while others may have seen them fail or be misused. This discrepancy underscores the need for clear and precise legal language and robust mechanisms to ensure the proper and fair application of the law.

Table 5

Given Pakistani socio-cultural reality, residing in the shelter house (provision the below statement provides) can physically harm the aggrieved person.					
<i>[Court will] ensure that the aggrieved person is provided shelter in a safe place of residence, if he or she so requires</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	12	30.0	30.0	60.0

Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	80.0
Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1140</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.300</i>	

Table 6

The given provision can be used against the aggrieved person and exact violence if the respondent stays away from the aggrieved for an extended time to avenge.

Court may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
Agree	7	17.5	17.5	45.0
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	65.0
Valid Disagree	13	32.5	32.5	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.2720</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.650</i>	

4.4.2 Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse has historically received less attention compared to other forms of domestic violence in Pakistani society. Table 7 encapsulates responses to a pertinent question: whether psychological violence is considered a form of domestic violence in Pakistan. The responses reveal no clear majority, reflecting the complexity of societal attitudes towards this issue. Nevertheless, the Bill remains relevant to the Pakistani socio-cultural context. However, there are nuances where, in some socio-religious circles, certain acts are permissible, which may lead to psychological violence.

A mean response of 2.625 suggests that average participants are torn between recognizing this violence as domestic violence or not. This means of a neutral midpoint implies that respondents are wary of taking a stance of acknowledging psychological abuse in the scope of domestic violence. The ambivalence in this suggests how hard it continues to be to conceptualize and admit psychological abuse as an important and important issue in the much wider discourse of domestic violence in Pakistan.

This shows a considerable range of opinions across respondents, represented by a standard deviation of 1.3902. This high variability indicates that although some of the participants strongly believe that psychological violence should be counted as domestic violence, the position of other people is unclear or opposed. It is the divergence in our opinions that varies depending on individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and how one defines abuse.

The various responses reflect the socio-cultural and linguistic aspects of dealing with psychological abuse in Pakistani society. The problematic side of psychological abuse is that it is subtle and used insidiously. The Bill must be clear and comprehensive to capture these behaviors properly. Nevertheless, socio-religious norms and cultural practices make this task difficult. Becoming normalized or justified as tradition or as teachings of religion may be, for some communities, behaviors that are considered psychological abuse.

A lack of majority consensus on what constitutes domestic violence as psychological violence increases the need to gain greater awareness and education. Psychological abuse is something that many people might not fully understand or fail to recognize in some of the behaviors in regards to psychological abuse. This 'blind

spot' in knowledge can strengthen the continuation of harmful traditions and inadequate victim protection.

Table 7

Psychological violence is considered a kind of domestic violence in Pakistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	3	7.5	7.5	42.5
Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	67.5
Valid Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	92.5
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3902</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.625</i>	

Table 8 indicates that most of the respondents consider the statement 'threats of divorce or second marriage because of baseless charges of insanity or infertility' as having alternative meanings. This plurality of interpretations is problematic because the defendants could apply the statement in such a way as to be understood in their favour.

This means the response of 2.275 indicates, generally speaking, a leaning toward the view that the given statement might be used in ways that would work to the defendant's disadvantage. This mean, which represents a mean away from the neutral midpoint but shows some slight agreement, also indicates a serious concern with the ambiguity in the statement's interpretation, placing a result at risk of unintended

consequence. This slight inclination towards agreement indicates that many participants anticipate potential manipulation or misapplication of the statement in judicial contexts.

The responses are very varied, with a standard deviation of 1.2401. A range like this in opinions means some respondents are sure there is potential for misuse. Other respondents are not as worried or see things differently depending on their experience or understanding of the law. Divergence in response becomes a characteristic of interpreting legal language and real-world situations.

From a linguistic point of view, the ambiguity of such a statement is a major problem. Since it is legal language, fair and consistent application requires that legal language be both precise and unambiguous. Phrases like 'threats of divorce or second marriage on hearsay of insanity or infertility' can mean whatever the context, the parties, and the cultural and social norms involved make of it. Such ambiguities in Pakistan's socio-cultural landscape can be fitted out differently, leading to unjust results.

What worries people is that this statement could be abused in legal fights. For example, given a male-oriented society, accusations of insanity or infertility could be exploited for men's purposes to control or threaten women in order to get an unjust divorce or a second forced one. In contrast, defendants can claim that such accusations are false or unfounded, thus complicating the legal process and leading to prolonged legal battles.

The mean of this was shown as 2.275, and in line with this was the standard deviation of the statement was 1.2401. This reflects that the claim for such statements is highly disputed, and there is a need for clearer legal definitions and guidelines to implement such statements rightly so that such statements cannot be misused. The legal provisions should determine how they can protect vulnerable parties without making room for those having malicious intent to invoke loops. Being sure to use language in legal texts narrowly and clearly can prevent the misinterpretation of such language, leading to injustice.

Responses to this issue vary widely, so people's experiences and points of view are very different. Some may have witnessed or experienced incidents where vague legal statements were misused, while others may trust the legal system to do what is fair with the explanation.

Table 8

Given the underlined word ‘baseless,’ the given statement can have multiple interpretations when concerning psychological or mental abuse.

threats of divorce or second marriage on baseless accusation of insanity or infertility

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	9	22.5	22.5	60.0
Neutral	7	17.5	17.5	77.5
Valid Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.2401</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.275</i>	

Table 9 highlights the potential for multiple interpretations in legal settings, particularly when considering the word ‘false’ in the given statement. Most participants think that this statement could be used against the victim. The data reflect this concern — the mean response is 1.800, and the standard deviation is 1.0178.

The mean of 1.800 indicates a strong agreement among respondents that the statement will likely be used against the aggrieved person. This mean is significantly below the neutral midpoint, suggesting that many participants feel the statement's language inherently disadvantages the victim. This strong leaning toward agreement underscores the perceived risk that the term ‘false’ can be weaponized in legal contexts.

The standard deviation of 1.0178 shows some variability in the responses, but it is relatively low, indicating that most respondents share similar concerns about the potential misuse of the statement. This consistency of opinion means that the respondents share a sense or experience of the implications of ambiguous legal terminology.

From a linguistic perspective, the term ‘false’ in legal statements can be especially problematic. The legal process can become very difficult because of ambiguity in what constitutes a ‘false’ accusation. When there has been domestic violence or abuse, the accuracy of an accusation may be hard to prove, particularly for a particularly vulnerable victim. It can be enough to deter a victim from coming forward or afterward if it is doubted or dismissed as a false claim.

In this term, in the Pakistani socio-cultural context, men are naturally preferred as the ‘Social playing field is not leveled, and the term ‘false’ can be damaging. Vulnerable to discrediting or being called false, alleging victim of DV may be those who lack the resources or the support to substantiate their claims. That situation results in a legal system that is functionally protecting the victim and upholding the status quo, making it possible for abusers to go free while cleverly hiding from the legal system.

The respondents' agreement that the statement can be used against the aggrieved person reflects broader concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of the legal system. The perception that legal language can be manipulated to disadvantage victims points to a need for more precise and victim-centered legal definitions. Ensuring that terms like ‘false’ are clearly defined and contextualized within the law can help protect victims and prevent misuse.

Table 9

Given the underlined word ‘false,’ the statement allows the leveling of true allegations upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household.

[Psychological violence includes] bringing false allegation upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household;

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	50.0	50.0
	Agree	13	32.5	82.5
	Neutral	2	5.0	87.5
	Disagree	5	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.0178</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.800</i>

Table 10 indicates that most participants believe that a protection order directing the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved party can further exacerbate the psychological effects on the party. This perception arises due to institutional and societal flaws and practices. Similarly, Table 11 suggests that this clause may also pose problems if misused, which is a distinct possibility given the realities of Pakistan. However, the responses for Table 11 are more divided compared to Table 10. Additionally, the statement ordering the respondent to secure alternate accommodation for the aggrieved person and pay the rent of such accommodation is perceived positively. However, the challenge with legal language lies in its interpretation, which is influenced by the context. A seemingly innocent and positive statement may be used to achieve controversial ends.

The mean response of Table 10 is 2.450, with a standard deviation of 1.3388. This suggests a moderate inclination towards agreement that the protection order to stay away from the aggrieved party can worsen the psychological effects on the aggrieved party. The standard deviation of 1.3388 indicates some variability in responses, but overall, there is a consensus among participants about the potential negative impact of this protection order.

For Table 11, the mean response is 2.425, with a standard deviation of 1.3939. This means there is a similar moderate inclination towards agreement that this clause may pose problems if misused. However, the higher standard deviation of 1.3939 suggests more response variability than Table 10. This variability indicates that while many participants recognize the potential issues with this clause, there is less consensus among respondents compared to Table 10.

The concerns raised about these clauses reflect broader apprehensions about the effectiveness and fairness of legal protections in the Pakistani context. The perception that certain legal provisions intended to safeguard victims may instead exacerbate their hardships underscores the need for careful consideration and implementation of such measures. Additionally, recognizing that seemingly positive statements can be misused highlights the importance of nuanced and context-sensitive legal language.

Table 10

The given provision may be used against the aggrieved person and exact psychological violence if the respondent stays away from the aggrieved for an extended period to exact revenge.

Court may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Agree	10	25.0	25.0	57.5
	Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	72.5
	Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	92.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0

Total	40	100.0	100.0
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3388</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.450</i>

Table 11

Given that the respondent wants to get rid of the aggrieved, the given statement may be interpreted in a way that it is used against the aggrieved person.

The court [...] may pass an order directing the respondent to secure alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	52.5
Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	65.0
Valid Disagree	13	32.5	32.5	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3939</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.425</i>	

Table 12 reveals that 52.5% of respondents agree that in Pakistani society, verbal abuse or calling names in the household is somewhat acceptable or not frowned upon. Meanwhile, 20% of participants remained neutral, and 27% disagreed. This

suggests that such Bill clauses are relevant to Pakistani society as they aim to address these issues.

The mean response for Table 12 is 2.550, with a standard deviation of 1.2393. This statistical mean indicates a moderate agreement among participants that verbal abuse or calling names is somewhat acceptable or not strongly condemned in Pakistani households. The standard deviation of 1.2393 suggests some variability in responses, but overall, there is a consensus among participants regarding the societal acceptance of such behavior, as reflected in the mean.

Table 12

In Pakistan, verbal abuse or calling names in the household is somewhat acceptable or not frowned upon.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
Agree	11	27.5	27.5	52.5
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	72.5
Valid Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	95.0
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.2393</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.550</i>	

Table 13 presents results on whether staring is considered violence in Pakistan. Agreement and disagreement are equally divided, with 16 responses each, while eight

responses remained neutral. Since it is debatable, the Bill rightly aims to criminalize staring and stalking. The seeming deadlock arises due to participants' personal experiences and social backgrounds.

The mean response for Table 13 is 2.775, with a standard deviation of 1.5440. This statistical mean indicates a moderate inclination towards agreement that staring should be considered a form of violence in Pakistan. The standard deviation of 1.5440 suggests some variability in responses, indicating that opinions on this issue are more diverse compared to Table 12.

The participants' responses reflect the complexities of societal attitudes towards verbal abuse, calling names, staring, and stalking. These behaviors can have significant psychological effects, regardless of whether they are perceived as acceptable or violent in society. The Bill's efforts to criminalize such behaviors reflect a recognition of their harmful impact on individuals and families.

Table 13

Stalking or starring is considered violence in Pakistani society.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	1	2.5	2.5	40.0
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	60.0
Valid Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	85.0
Strongly Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard</i>	<i>1.5440</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.775</i>	

Deviation

Table 14 indicates that 87.5% of participants believe that physical and medical examinations after the commission of domestic violence can be traumatizing to the aggrieved party. Meanwhile, 2.5% of participants remained neutral, and 10% disagreed with the statement. This perception highlights the potential emotional and psychological impact of such examinations on victims of domestic violence, particularly considering the procedural and accessibility challenges in many areas.

The mean response for Table 14 is 1.625, with a standard deviation of 0.9524. This statistical mean of the responses suggests a strong agreement among participants that physical and medical examinations following domestic violence can indeed be traumatizing for the aggrieved party. The standard deviation of 0.9524 indicates relatively low variability in responses, indicating a high degree of consensus among participants regarding the emotional toll of these examinations.

The overwhelming agreement among participants reflects a widespread recognition of the sensitive and potentially distressing nature of physical and medical examinations in the aftermath of domestic violence. Such examinations can exacerbate the trauma experienced by victims, particularly if conducted without sufficient sensitivity, privacy, or support.

Table 14

An aggrieved person goes through psychological turmoil while going through the ordeal of physical and medical examination in case of domestic violence.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	24	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Agree	11	27.5	27.5	87.5

Neutral	1	2.5	2.5	90.0
Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>0.9524</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.625</i>	

Table 15 indicates that 80% of the total participants agree that the trial process for domestic violence can be uncomfortable for the aggrieved party. This perception highlights the irony that the system intended to protect aggrieved persons can sometimes lead to further violation. Conversely, 17.5% of participants disagree, while 2.5% remain neutral. This suggests differing views on the trial process, but many participants find it problematic, indicating a need for scrutiny and potential reform.

The mean response for Table 15 is 1.925, with a standard deviation of 1.0952. This mean response suggests a moderate agreement among participants that the trial mechanism for the aggrieved party can indeed be troublesome. The standard deviation of 1.0952 indicates some variability in responses, suggesting that while there is a consensus on the discomfort caused by the trial process, opinions vary to some extent among participants.

The significant agreement among participants reflects a widespread recognition of the challenges and shortcomings inherent in the trial process for domestic violence cases. Victims may find the legal proceedings re-traumatizing, intimidating, or emotionally taxing, particularly if they feel unsupported or disbelieved during the trial.

The disagreement and neutrality among some participants suggest differing perspectives on the trial process. Some may believe that the current system adequately protects the rights and well-being of aggrieved parties, while others may not perceive the same level of discomfort or difficulty associated with the trial process.

Table 15

Trials of domestic violence violate the mental peace of the aggrieved person.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
Agree	14	35.0	35.0	80.0
Valid Neutral	1	2.5	2.5	82.5
Disagree	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.0952</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.925</i>	

Table 16 indicates that most participants agree that dispossessing an aggrieved person of their property is considered the right of the male member. This perception reflects a troubling gender-based dynamic within certain societal norms. However, participants recognize the relevance of clauses aimed at preventing this practice.

A mean response of 2.275 is found for Table 16, with a standard deviation of 1.2606. The mean implies that the participants agree moderately that the male member has a right to dispossess the aggrieved person's property. The standard deviation of 1.2606 indicates some variability in responses, but there is general agreement among participants.

Participants agreeing are recognizing the overwhelming inequitable practices and inequities present in many parts of society regarding gender. When a person is dispossessed of their property, their property, regardless of gender, this is a violation of their rights and the freedom to choose how they live. Therefore, the issue of this problem has been recognized and has given rise to the need for legal measures to protect

people from such injustice.

The fact that so many participants are aware of the prevalence of this business practice and its adverse effects makes the clauses that seek to curtail this practice relevant. Promoting equality and justice within society must include provisions in legal rules that guarantee property rights and prevent acts of discrimination. These clauses work to bring gender-based inequalities and, in doing so, protect the rights of aggrieved people to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity.

Table 16

Given the socio-cultural reality of Pakistan, dispossessing an aggrieved person of the household is considered the right of the male or any other dominating member of the shared household.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	9	22.5	22.5	60.0
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	80.0
Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	95.0
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.2606</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.275</i>	

Table 17 presents different opinions as to whether verbal abuse can be considered violence in Pakistan. The standard deviation is 1.3195, and the mean response is 3.050.

Our participants' mean score of 3.050 represents agreement to neutral to a slightly leaning agreement that verbal abuse is a form of violence in Pakistan. This means that this situation and other related problems boast some fans who see verbal abuse as a form of violence and some who argue otherwise.

Figure 1.3195 shows that the mean latency variation is large, i.e., considerable response variability. Such variability suggests that participants have varying views on whether verbal abuse is a form of violence. Verbal abuse could get patrons on both sides strongly agreeing, treating verbal abuse as a very serious form of violence that can lead to serious harm or, on other results, disagreeing, maybe based on cultural or personal beliefs about what constitutes violence.

Responses vary from the complexity of society's attitude towards verbal abuse and violence in Pakistan. Some will see the damaging effects of verbal abuse and struggle to call it violence; others will minimize its role or try to ignore other modes of abuse.

Table 17

In Pakistan's socio-cultural dynamics, verbal abuse or calling names in the household is considered violence.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	5	12.5	12.5	32.5
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	52.5
Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	90.0
Strongly Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3195</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>3.050</i>
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4.4.3 Economic Abuse

The inclusion of economic abuse as a distinct form of domestic violence in the Bill reflects a broader social trend of regarding the coercive ways of exerting and maintaining economic control as constituting an abusive relationship. The Bill explicitly highlights Monetary Abuse under a separate heading, 'Monetary Abuse,' and directs its attention to raising awareness about it and giving legal protection to people who undergo it.

Different opinions about other forms of domestic abuse in Pakistani society are visible in Table 18 (whether economic abuse is considered domestic abuse). The mean of our response is 3.275, standard deviation 1.2808.

The mean of responses is calculated as 3.275, which shows little agreement among participants that economic abuse is a type of domestic abuse in Pakistan. There does not appear to be a strong consensus regarding economic abuse as a kind of domestic violence, but there is likely a leaning toward that.

Some response variability is observed (with a standard deviation of 1.2808). The variability provided hints that participants took different views as to whether economic abuse fell within the realm of domestic violence. Others are likely to firmly take the view that economic abuse should be recognized and acted upon as a form of domestic abuse, but others may be more skeptical or may hold other more cultural or societal views as to the nature of economic control and coercion in households.

These data show that 52.5% of respondents do not consider economic abuse to be a form of domestic violence. This captures the richness of the ambivalence with which society views economic control and coercion in relationships within the home, which might vary according to cultural norms, religious beliefs, or economic circumstances.

Table 18

Suffering because of economic abuse is considered violence in Pakistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	25.0
Neutral	9	22.5	22.5	47.5
Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	85.0
Strongly Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.2808</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>3.275</i>	

Table 19 investigates whether such an act constitutes violence concerning economic control and deprivation in Pakistani society. The standard deviation is 1.3471, and the mean response is 2.925.

The responses have a mean of 2.925, implying leaning towards disagreement with the statement that economic deprivation or economic control is violence in Pakistani society. This finding suggests there is no strong consensus among participants, though there may be an inclination to succumb to the idea that economic control is not violence.

The response was not unanimous — there was some variance represented by a standard deviation 1.3471, indicating people disagreed on the issue. They may believe, for example, that economic control is a kind of violence, or they might not, and they might have cultural or religious beliefs about how economic dynamics play out in relationship dynamics.

The data shows that 40 percent of participants are opposed to the idea of categorizing economic deprivation or control as violence. It may be a case of skepticism based on cultural traditions, religious preaching, or personal convictions about the part of economic dynamics role in the households.

The fact that 27.5 percent of participants were neutral adds to the issue's complexity. In that sense, economic control has not been seen as violent by many people, perhaps because they do not know how to unravel the nuances — or because other societal messages clash with them.

Understanding what constitutes violence is complicated by a mosaic of religious and cultural norms and economic control, especially in Pakistan, which is, therefore, of a certain level of sophistication. Some may see economic power as abuse, while others may see it as a legitimate component of familial or spousal power.

Table 19

Economic deprivation or economic control is considered violence in Pakistani society.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
Agree	3	7.5	7.5	32.5
Neutral	11	27.5	27.5	60.0
Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	90.0
Strongly Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3471</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.925</i>	

Table 20 argues that words from Bill's definition of economic abuse, such as 'intentional,' are perceived as ambiguous. The standard deviation of the mean response is 1.0670 and mean is equal to 1.800.

The responses have a mean of 1.800 and show moderate agreement by participants that the definition of economic abuse in the Bill can have different interpretations. This leads one to presume that there is general agreement that the definition of language is open to divergent interpretations.

Some deviations in responses are suggested by a standard deviation of 1.0670, representing various points of view regarding the definition's clarity. Most participants opine that the definition is unclear, but some will think that the definition is too clear or straightforward, while others will suppose that the definition is even more ambiguous.

The data indicates that 70% of the participants doubt that the definition of economic abuse could be interpreted in various ways. This ambiguity may stem from the subjective nature of intent, which can be difficult to prove or define definitively within the context of economic dynamics within relationships. The neutrality of 17% of participants suggests that some individuals may be unsure or conflicted about the clarity of the definition, reflecting uncertainty about its interpretation and implications.

Table 20

The given definition can have multiple interpretations.

“economic abuse” includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	22	55.0	55.0	55.0

Agree	8	20.0	20.0	75.0
Neutral	7	17.5	17.5	92.5
Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.0670</i>	<i>Mean</i>	1.800	

Table 21 highlights the contentious nature of the definition of economic abuse, particularly due to the inclusion of the word 'intentional.' The mean response is 2.175, with a standard deviation of 1.1959.

With a mean of 2.175, the responses indicate a moderate agreement among participants that the definition of economic abuse in the Bill can be used in favor of the respondent and may even acquit them. This suggests that there is a consensus that the language used in the definition could potentially benefit the accused party.

The standard deviation of 1.1959 indicates some variability in responses, reflecting differing perspectives on the potential impact of the definition. While the majority of participants agree that the definition could be used to benefit the respondent, there may be some who perceive it differently, either viewing it as more or less favorable to the accused party.

The data suggests that 65% of participants believe the definition of economic abuse could be used to benefit the respondent, indicating significant concerns about its potential implications in legal proceedings. This concern likely stems from the subjective nature of intent and the potential for ambiguity in interpreting the definition.

The neutrality of 12.5% of participants suggests that some individuals may be unsure or conflicted about the potential impact of the definition, reflecting uncertainty about its interpretation and implications.

Table 21

The given definition may acquit the respondent of the crime by interpreting the underlined ‘intentional’ in the respondent's favor.

“economic abuse” includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	10	25.0	25.0	65.0
	Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	77.5
	Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>		1.1959	<i>Mean</i>	2.175	

Table 22 explores the applicability of a clause restraining the respondent from dispossessing the aggrieved person from the household in the Pakistani context. The mean response is 2.700, with a standard deviation of 1.4711.

With a mean of 2.700, the responses indicate a moderate agreement among participants regarding the applicability of the clause in Pakistan. This suggests that opinions are divided, with some participants believing the clause can be applied while others may be more skeptical. The standard deviation of 1.4711 indicates considerable response variability, reflecting differing perspectives on the feasibility of implementing

such a clause in Pakistani society. While 50% of participants believe the clause is applicable, 35% disagree, indicating significant disagreement within the sample.

The neutrality of 15% of participants suggests uncertainty or ambivalence about the applicability of the clause, further highlighting the issue's complexity. This uncertainty may stem from cultural norms, legal frameworks, and practical considerations regarding enforcement.

Table 22

The following clause is successfully applicable in Pakistan.

[Court may pass an order] restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the household;

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	50.0
Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	65.0
Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	85.0
Strongly Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.4711</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.700</i>	

Table 23 considers views held by participants about the necessity of obligating the respondent to seek alternative accommodation or pay rent for the aggrieved person

if the circumstances arise. The average response equals 2.375, with a standard deviation of 1.3528.

Responses were with a mean of 2.375, with a fairly moderate degree of disagreement among the participants on the applicability of this clause in Pakistani society. This means that people have different opinions regarding the clause's applicability.

The standard deviation of 1.3528 reflects variability in responses, indicating differing perspectives on the feasibility of implementing this clause. While 25% of participants believe the clause can be applied, 50% disagree, suggesting significant disagreement within the sample.

The neutrality of 25% of participants suggests uncertainty or ambivalence about the clause's applicability, underscoring the issue's complexity. This uncertainty may stem from practical considerations, such as housing availability and affordability, as well as cultural and legal factors.

Table 23

In the Pakistani context, the given clause can be implemented in its spirit.

[Court may pass an order] directing the respondent to secure alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
Agree	3	7.5	7.5	50.0
Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	75.0
Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	95.0

Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	1.3528	<i>Mean</i>	2.375	

Table 24 indicates that most participants believe it is difficult for aggrieved persons to bear the expenses of the courts. The mean response is 3.400, with a standard deviation of 1.1723.

With a mean of 3.400, the responses suggest moderate agreement among participants that aggrieved persons struggle to cover court expenses. This indicates a consensus that financial barriers exist for individuals seeking legal recourse in cases of domestic violence.

The standard deviation of 1.1723 reflects some variability in responses, indicating differing perspectives on the financial challenges aggrieved persons confront. While the majority agree that court expenses are burdensome, some participants may hold differing views based on their experiences or perceptions.

The data suggests that 55 percent of the participants think it is difficult for those aggrieved to bear court expenses, which also suggests that the legal system is replete with financial barriers. This discovery clearly shows the necessity of socio-economic factors in the discussion of justice for victims of domestic violence.

25% of the participants indicate neutrality (or ambivalence) about the financial burden of aggrieved persons. Perhaps this neutrality is the result of different experiences or different perspectives, those of the lawyers, as responses to the varying needs that people come from asking for legal help.

Table 24

In Pakistan, the aggrieved persons can bear the expenses of the courts.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	20.0
Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	45.0
Disagree	16	40.0	40.0	85.0
Strongly Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.723</i>	<i>Mean</i>	3.400	

Table 25 shows that the majority of participants in Pakistan consider aggrieved persons as financially weak. The responses with a mean of 2.300 imply moderate agreement among participants that aggrieved persons are financially weak in Pakistan. It indicates a general awareness of what domestic violence faces as a socio-economic challenge.

Since the standard deviation of 1.1591 in responses shows some variability, people view the financial status of aggrieved persons differently. Most agree that aggrieved persons are financially poor, but some may not agree because they may have learned it from their observations or experiences.

Based on the data, we find that 55 percent of participants believe aggrieved persons are financially weak, indicating that victims of domestic violence are highly likely to be economically vulnerable. The finding points out the importance of expanding efforts to improve economic empowerment as well as support for people

experiencing abuse.

25% of participants' neutrality further indicates uncertainty or ambivalence over the financial status of aggrieved persons. The neutrality of this may come from different experiences and different perspectives of various participants who are differently positioned on different realities surrounding domestic violence.

Table 25

Aggrieved persons are financially weak in Pakistan.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	8	20.0	20.0	55.0
Valid	Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	80.0
	Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1591</i>	<i>Mean</i>	2.300	

Table 26 explores participants' views on whether respondents pay the expenses of children in cases of domestic violence. The mean response is 2.150, with a standard deviation of 1.3502.

With a mean of 2.150, the responses suggest a moderate level of agreement among participants that respondents do indeed pay the expenses of children in Pakistan in cases of domestic violence. This indicates a general acknowledgment of the legal provisions in place to protect the economic rights of children.

The standard deviation of 1.3502 reflects some variability in responses,

suggesting differing perspectives on the extent to which respondents fulfill their financial obligations towards children in cases of domestic violence. While most agree that respondents pay expenses, some participants may hold differing views based on their observations or experiences.

Table 26

In Pakistan, the respondent pays the expenses of children in case of domestic violence.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
Agree	5	12.5	12.5	62.5
Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	77.5
Disagree	7	17.5	17.5	95.0
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3502</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.150</i>	

Table 27 indicates that the majority of respondents believe that cases of domestic violence take longer to resolve. The mean response is 2.550, with a standard deviation of 1.4667.

With a mean of 2.550, the responses suggest a moderate level of agreement among participants that cases of domestic violence indeed take longer to resolve. This indicates a general perception among respondents that there are delays in resolving such cases within the judicial system.

The standard deviation of 1.4667 reflects some variability in responses, suggesting differing perspectives on the timeliness of case resolution. While most agree that cases take longer, some participants may hold differing views based on their experiences or observations.

The data suggests that the majority of respondents share the perception that cases of domestic violence experience delays in resolution, highlighting potential inefficiencies or challenges within the legal system. This finding underscores the importance of addressing barriers to timely justice for victims of domestic violence.

Table 27

In the Pakistani context, cases of domestic violence take longer to conclude and are tedious for the aggrieved person.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	50.0
Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	62.5
Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	92.5
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	1.4667	<i>Mean</i>	2.550	

4.4.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is one of the most sensitive types of domestic violence, which bears psychological and physical effects for the survivors. Nevertheless, sexual abuse

does not appear in a chapter of its own as other abuse, such as economic abuse, does. Instead, it is generally handled along with other kinds of abuse, such as physical and psychological, under broader terms.

This might be attributable to a few elements of lack of individual focus on sexual abuse inside the Bill. This means that firstly, it may well be tabooed and stigmatized in society to discuss sexual violence, which means it is not out there talking about. In addition, the very legal frameworks and definitions of sexual abuse can be convoluted and multilayered, making it difficult to express the terms in the documents that accompany changes in law.

Secondly, the integration of sexual abuse within broader provisions as other forms of abuse may aim to have legal processes and have comprehensive protection of the survivors. Through the Bill, domestic violence victims will be treated as one, addressing various forms of abuse on a holistic basis. While sexual abuse continues to be sensitive, legislative frameworks such as the Bill acknowledge and prioritize the needs of survivors.

As seen in Table 28, most participants hold that the definition of economic abuse in the Bill is not exhaustive. 1.625 is the mean response, and 0.9251 is the standard deviation.

Responses averaged at a mean of 1.625, indicating strong agreement by participants that the given definition of economic abuse does not capture all kinds of economic abuse. This suggests that respondents widely perceive the definition as missing critical elements or not sufficiently capturing the range of economic abuse within domestic relationships.

With a standard deviation of 0.9251, we find minimal variability in responses across sources, indicating good agreement about the incompleteness of the definition. While there will probably be some difference in degree of agreement, most respondents agree that the definition is lacking.

Statistics show that 85% of the participants think the definition of economic abuse is lacking, which means there are huge concerns about the feasibility of the legal framework for economic abuse in a domestic environment. The finding reinforces the need to refine and extend the definition to extend comprehensive protection for victims

of economic abuse.

The neutrality of 7.5% of participants suggests a small proportion of individuals who may be uncertain or ambivalent about the completeness of the definition. This may stem from varying interpretations or perspectives on the issue.

Table 28

The given statement is complete.

"sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the vulnerable person or any other person;

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Agree	24	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Agree	10	25.0	25.0	85.0
Valid	Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	92.5
	Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>0.9251</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.625</i>	

The data presented in Table 29, which examines respondents' opinions on whether they should cover the medical expenses of the aggrieved party in instances of sexual abuse, reveals a nuanced distribution of views. The mean and standard deviation of the responses summarize the findings.

The mean response is 3.400, indicating that, on average, participants are closer to neutrality but slightly leaning towards disagreement with the statement that

respondents should pay medical expenses. This mean value, positioned above the neutral point of 3.0 on a typical Likert scale (assuming a 5-point scale), suggests a general tendency towards the notion that respondents do not bear this financial responsibility.

However, the standard deviation of 1.1723 indicates a considerable response spread. This level of dispersion points to a diverse set of opinions among the participants. A higher standard deviation suggests that while a central tendency can be identified, individual responses vary widely from the mean.

Breaking down the response categories, most respondents (57.5%) disagree that they should cover medical expenses. This majority indicates a prevalent sentiment against bearing such costs. On the other hand, 25% of respondents remain neutral, reflecting uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion on the matter. Various factors, such as lack of information, personal beliefs, or the issue's complexity, might influence this neutral stance.

Interestingly, 17.5% of the respondents agree with the statement, showcasing a minority but noteworthy group that supports the idea of respondents covering medical expenses. This divergence indicates that while the predominant view is against responsibility, a significant portion of the population still believes otherwise.

Table 29

In Pakistan, the respondent pays the medical expenses of the aggrieved party in case of sexual abuse.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Agree	2	5.0	5.0	17.5
	Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	42.5
	Disagree	18	45.0	45.0	87.5

Strongly Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1723</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>3.400</i>	

The clauses of the Bill encourage victims to report crimes and emphasize the importance of proper documentation and leveling of charges. However, the ground realities in Pakistan present significant challenges. Despite the Bill's well-crafted language, its practical relevance and effectiveness are debatable.

Table 30 sheds light on the openness of discussing sexual abuse in Pakistan. According to the table, 30% of participants believe that sexual abuse is open for discussion, 12.5% remain neutral, and a substantial 57.5% find it somewhat problematic to discuss this sensitive issue. These figures reflect the willingness of the population to engage in conversations about sexual abuse, which remains a sensitive topic.

The average response, represented by a mean of 3.100, suggests that, on the whole, participants lean slightly towards neutrality but with a slight inclination towards viewing sexual abuse discussions as problematic. This mean value, just above the midpoint of a typical Likert scale (assuming a 5-point scale), indicates that while there is some openness to discussion, the overall sentiment is closer to recognizing its associated difficulties.

The standard deviation of 1.3737 highlights a considerable variability in responses. This significant spread indicates a wide range of opinions among participants, with some feeling strongly that sexual abuse is open for discussion and others finding it significantly problematic.

The data reveals that while there is a segment of the population (30%) that believes sexual abuse can be openly discussed, a larger proportion (57.5%) sees it as a problematic topic. The neutral stance of 12.5% further underscores the ambivalence or

uncertainty that some participants feel regarding this issue.

The low number of reports and FIRs (First Information Reports) related to sexual abuse in Pakistan can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of quality education and awareness, as well as the cultural taboo and honor associated with discussing sexual abuse. These factors contribute to the reluctance of victims to report such crimes and the broader societal challenges in addressing and discussing sexual abuse openly.

Table 30

In Pakistani socio-religious context, sexual abuse is open for discussion.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Agree	2	5.0	5.0	30.0
	Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	42.5
	Disagree	20	50.0	50.0	92.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3737</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>3.100</i>	

The two-finger test is an infamous and outdated medical examination used to determine sexual activity in females. Despite being declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2021, some doctors continue to perform this test. Table 31 reveals public opinion on this matter: 80% of participants agree that the two-finger test violates

the dignity of the aggrieved person, typically a woman. Another 10% remain neutral, while the remaining 10% believe the test does not violate a woman's dignity. This distribution highlights a strong consensus against the practice, with significant moral and ethical concerns.

The mean response of 1.950 indicates a general agreement with the statement that the two-finger test violates the dignity of women. On a typical Likert scale, where lower values represent agreement and higher values represent disagreement, a mean close to 2.0 suggests a predominant sentiment that the test is indeed a violation of dignity. This average reflects the substantial majority who oppose the practice.

The standard deviation of 0.9323 signifies some variation in the responses, though not excessively wide. This indicates that while there is a strong majority consensus, there are differing opinions within the minority groups. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that most responses are clustered around the mean, with fewer outliers.

The data underscores the contentious nature of the two-finger test and its impact on women's dignity. The overwhelming agreement that the test violates dignity, contrasted with the small minority who do not see it that way, reflects the ongoing debate and cultural perspectives within Pakistan.

Additionally, the Bill, which aims to allow extensive medical examination in cases of sexual abuse, is susceptible to misuse. This potential for abuse is particularly concerning given the existing practice of the two-finger test despite its legal prohibition. The broad authority granted by the Bill could inadvertently perpetuate invasive and degrading examinations, further violating victims' rights and dignity.

Table 31

The two-finger test humiliates/degrades/violates the dignity of the aggrieved person.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Agree	18	45.0	45.0	80.0
	Neutral	4	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>0.9323</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.950</i>	

4.4.5 General

In the general section of the questionnaire, the broad question of domestic violence is covered by various views and experiences. Specifically, within this section, Table 32 examines opinions on whether male members are excluded from discussions about domestic violence. The data shows a more nuanced picture of opinions, with 50% of respondents saying yes, male members excluded. The result, therefore, implies that respondents were extremely concerned about the inclination of the narrative of domestic violence to focus predominantly on female victims and at the expense of male victims' experiences and needs.

The mean response to this question is 2.800, indicating that, on average, respondents lean slightly towards agreeing with the statement that male members are excluded. Given that the scale's midpoint is 3, a mean of 2.800 suggests a slight tendency towards agreement, though not strong. This subtle leaning towards agreement reflects a perception among respondents that the issue of male exclusion in domestic violence discussions is present but not overwhelmingly acknowledged.

It contains much variability in responses, with the standard deviation equaling 1.5884. This high standard deviation indicates, on the one hand, that some respondents are very strongly in agreement with the statement, and others are very strongly in disagreement, with many in between. The opinions are spread, evidencing the

complexity of perceptions regarding the inclusion of male members in domestic violence narratives. However, this finding shows that a slim majority is concerned about the issue of exclusion, while a significant part of the population has a different view.

In addition to those who agree, 7.5% of respondents remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This neutrality may indicate a lack of strong opinion or a sense of ambivalence about whether male members are excluded from discussions about domestic violence. It suggests that a small population might not feel well-informed or sufficiently engaged with the issue to take a definitive stance.

Conversely, 42.5% of respondents disagree to varying degrees with the statement that male members are excluded. This substantial portion of the population believes that male members are not overlooked in discussions about domestic violence or feels that such discussions are inclusive of all genders. The diversity of disagreement, from slight to strong, reflects various beliefs and perceptions, emphasizing that different people view this issue differently.

Table 32

Male members are excluded from the protection system mentioned in the given statement.

‘WHEREAS it is essential to establish a protection system for effective service delivery to women, children and any vulnerable person to create an enabling environment to encourage and facilitate women, children, and any vulnerable persons to freely play their desired role in society, and to provide for ancillary matters;’

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Agree	7	17.5	17.5	50.0
Valid	Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	57.5
	Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0

Total	40	100.0	100.0
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.5884</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.800</i>

Table 33 of the questionnaire explores the extent to which the statement containing the phrase "with or without sureties" can be interpreted in favor of the offender. The data reveals a varied range of opinions among respondents, indicating differing perspectives on the clarity and implications of this clause. A notable 30% of respondents strongly agree that the statement could be interpreted in favor of the offender, suggesting a significant concern that the language may be seen as lenient or ambiguous, potentially benefiting those accused of domestic violence.

This other concern is also confirmed by another 17.5% of respondents agreeing with the interpretation that the clause is biased in favor of the offender. These numbers combined tell us that more or less 47.5 percent of the respondents think the statement may be advantageous to the offenders, meaning they fear the legal language used, which might raise some concerns in the judicial process.

On the other hand, 25% of respondents believe they have no view on this issue, and they do not agree or disagree that a clause 'with or without sureties' can be interpreted in favor of the convicted. This neutrality implies that perhaps a quarter of the respondents may see the clause as balanced or unclear about its outcome.

Meanwhile, 27.5 percent of respondents disagree with the interpretation that the clause benefits the offender. Over a quarter of respondents believed the language does not per se confer benefit in this sense and may be viewed at least as fair and perhaps as neutral or neutralizing language. Maybe there is an unwillingness to agree because of different legal understandings, experiences, or interpretations of the phrase 'with or without sureties.'

The mean response to this question is 2.500, indicating that, on average, respondents are neutral to the interpretation of the clause. It is that mean value, which is right on the exact pencil mark in the middle of that type of common Likert scale: from 1 to 5, and it is not leaning one direction or another here, such that you are having

much agreement, or you are having much disagreement. This illustrates how opinions of the term 'with or without sureties' are already polarized and could be ambiguous.

The standard deviation for the responses is 1.1983, indicating a moderate level of variability in opinions. This suggests that while there is some dispersion in the responses, the opinions are not extremely varied, but there is still a significant spread. This level of standard deviation points to a mix of agreement, neutrality, and disagreement, reinforcing the idea that the statement's interpretation is not straightforward and is subject to personal and possibly contextual differences among respondents.

Table 33

The given statement can be interpreted in favor of the respondent (supposed perpetrator of domestic violence) due to the underlined words ‘with or without sureties.’

The court may require from the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, for preventing the commission of domestic violence.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	7	17.5	17.5	47.5
	Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	72.5
	Disagree	11	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1983</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.500</i>	

Table 34 presents the distribution of participants' opinions regarding the appropriateness of using the phrase “an appropriate person or service provider” about an aggrieved female within the clause “...if the aggrieved person is a child then an appropriate person or service provider shall be determined by the Court...”. The

participants' responses were diverse, reflecting varying levels of agreement and disagreement.

Specifically, 35% of participants strongly agree with the phrase, indicating that a significant portion of the sample believes it is suitable and likely clear or flexible enough to apply in the context of an aggrieved female. Another 12.5% agree, suggesting that while they support the phrase, their conviction might not be as strong as those who strongly agree. Together, this 47.5% majority indicates a leaning toward acceptance of the phrase among the participants.

Conversely, 25% of participants disagree with the usage, implying that they find the phrase inappropriate or potentially problematic when applied to an aggrieved female. A further 12.5% strongly disagree, underscoring a firm opposition and possibly perceiving significant issues or a lack of suitability in the phrase. This results in a total of 37.5% expressing varying degrees of disapproval.

Meanwhile, 15% of the participants remain neutral, indicating no strong feelings, possibly due to a lack of clarity or indifference towards the phrase's applicability.

The calculated mean of these responses is 2.675, which, when considering a scale where higher values indicate stronger agreement, suggests an overall leaning towards agreement but not overwhelmingly so. This mean reflects the central tendency of the participants' opinions, showing a moderate inclination towards acceptance of the phrase.

The standard deviation is 1.4916, which signifies a relatively high level of variability in the participants' responses. This widespread indicates that while there is a central tendency towards agreement, opinions are quite dispersed, with significant proportions strongly agreeing and strongly disagreeing. This variability highlights the contentious nature of the phrase's applicability, suggesting that while a consensus leans towards acceptance, there is substantial disagreement and differing perspectives among the participants.

Table 34

The underlined words ‘an appropriate person or service provider’ can be used against an aggrieved female (supposed victim of domestic violence).

...if the aggrieved person is a child then an appropriate person or service provider shall be determined by the Court as per the Guardians and Wards Act 1890;

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	5	12.5	12.5	47.5
Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	62.5
Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	87.5
Strongly Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.4916</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.675</i>	

Table 35 reflects the participants' opinions on whether the Bill is in contention with the provisions of the Hudood Ordinance. The distribution of responses indicates a varied range of perspectives, showcasing both strong agreement and strong disagreement among participants.

Notably, 40% of the participants strongly agree that the Bill is in contention with the Hudood Ordinance. This significant portion underscores a robust belief among these respondents that there is a clear conflict between the Bill and the provisions of the Hudood Ordinance. Additionally, 17.5% of the participants agree with this viewpoint, though with less intensity. This 57.5% majority indicates that more than half of the respondents perceive some contention between the Bill and the Hudood Ordinance.

In contrast, a smaller portion of the participants disagree with this perspective. Specifically, 10% of the participants disagree, and another 10% strongly disagree with the assertion that the Bill is in contention with the Hudood Ordinance. This total of 20% indicates that a minority of the respondents do not see a conflict between the Bill and

the Ordinance, suggesting that they either find the provisions compatible or see no significant issues arising from the Bill concerning the Hudood Ordinance.

A notable 22.5% of the participants remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. This neutrality might stem from insufficient information to form an opinion, indifference, or a belief that the contention is unclear and might depend on specific circumstances or interpretations.

The mean of these responses is calculated to be 2.325, suggesting a slight leaning toward the perception that the Bill is in contention with the Hudood Ordinance. However, the mean is relatively close to the midpoint of the scale, indicating that while there is a tendency towards agreement, it is not overwhelming and reflects some level of ambivalence or moderate agreement among the participants.

The standard deviation of 1.3660 indicates moderate variability in the responses. This level of dispersion suggests that while there is a central tendency towards perceiving a contention, the opinions are quite spread out. Some participants strongly agree or strongly disagree, indicating polarized views, whereas others fall somewhere in between or remain neutral. This variability highlights that the issue is somewhat contentious and that there is no unanimous consensus among the participants, reflecting differing interpretations and opinions.

Table 35

The given clause is in contention with the provisions of the Hudood Ordinance.

The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, any other law for the time being in force.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Agree	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	7	17.5	17.5	57.5
Valid	Neutral	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
	Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0

Total	40	100.0	100.0
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3660</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.325</i>

Table 36 reveals the participants' views on the acquittal of a defendant after being pardoned by the aggrieved person or their family in Pakistan. The responses indicate a clear trend towards agreement with this practice, though opinions still vary.

A significant majority, 52.5%, of participants strongly agree with the statement. This substantial proportion indicates a robust belief among more than half of the respondents that acquitting a defendant following a pardon from the aggrieved party or their family is a common and accepted practice in Pakistan. Additionally, 30% of the participants agree with this statement, though with less intensity. These figures show that 82.5% of the participants strongly or moderately agree, indicating a dominant perception that pardons leading to acquittals are a well-recognized and frequent occurrence.

A small minority of participants hold opposing views. Specifically, 12.5% of the participants disagree, and 2.5% strongly disagree with the statement. This total of 15% represents a fraction of the sample that does not believe that acquittal following a pardon is a standard practice, possibly suggesting unfamiliarity with such cases or a belief that this practice should not happen as described.

A negligible 2.5% of participants remain neutral, indicating neither agree nor disagree. This neutrality might be due to insufficient knowledge about the practice or indifference towards the issue.

The calculated mean of 1.825 reflects the overall tendency towards agreement among the participants. On a scale where lower values correspond to stronger agreement, this mean is relatively low, indicating a strong overall inclination towards the belief that defendants are indeed acquitted following a pardon by the aggrieved party or their family. The mean is close to the value representing strong agreement, reinforcing the dominant perception of this practice being prevalent.

The standard deviation of 1.1297 indicates moderate variability in the responses. While the majority agree or strongly agree, some disagreement, and a small

neutral segment introduces variability into the dataset. This spread suggests that while there is a strong central tendency towards agreement, there are still some differing views among the participants. This variability could reflect differing personal experiences, interpretations of the legal system, or knowledge about specific cases where such pardons have led to acquittals.

Table 36

Regarding Pakistani culture and society, the respondent is acquitted after being pardoned by the aggrieved person or the aggrieved person's family.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
Agree	12	30.0	30.0	82.5
Neutral	1	2.5	2.5	85.0
Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1297</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.825</i>	

Table 37 presents the participants' opinions on whether a defendant must return the possession of 'property, valuables, documents' to the aggrieved party in Pakistan. The responses indicate a wide range of opinions, with significant portions of the participants either strongly agreeing, remaining neutral, or disagreeing with this statement.

Specifically, 30% of the respondents strongly agree that defendants return such possessions to the aggrieved party. This substantial segment underscores a strong belief among nearly one-third of the participants that returning property and valuables is a standard practice in Pakistan. Additionally, 10% agree with this statement, suggesting that while they support the notion, their conviction is less intense than those who

strongly agree. This 40% indicates that many participants recognize or believe in returning possessions to the aggrieved party.

Conversely, a notable portion of participants do not share this view. Specifically, 22.5% of the respondents disagree, and 7.5% strongly disagree with the statement. This combined 30% reflects a significant minority that either doubts the regularity of such returns or believes that this practice does not commonly occur. Their disagreement might stem from personal experiences, observations of legal processes, or perceptions of systemic issues within property restitution.

Interestingly, 30% of the respondents remain neutral on this issue. This large neutral segment suggests uncertainty or ambivalence among many participants. These individuals might lack sufficient information to form a strong opinion or believe that the practice of returning possessions is too inconsistent to agree or disagree with the statement definitively.

The mean of these responses is 2.675, indicating a slight overall leaning toward agreement. On a scale where lower values represent stronger agreement, this means a moderate tendency towards believing that defendants return possessions to the aggrieved party. However, it is relatively close to the midpoint, reflecting considerable ambivalence and a lack of overwhelming consensus among participants.

The standard deviation of 1.3280 signifies moderate variability in the responses. This spread indicates that opinions are quite dispersed while there is a central tendency towards agreement. Many participants strongly agree, while others strongly disagree, remain neutral, or moderately agree or disagree. This variability highlights the contentious nature of the issue and suggests that the practice of returning possessions to the aggrieved party may not be uniformly observed or experienced, leading to diverse perspectives among the participants.

Table 37

Given Pakistan's socio-cultural reality, the respondents return the possession of 'property, valuables, documents' to the aggrieved party.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Agree	4	10.0	10.0	40.0
	Neutral	12	30.0	30.0	70.0
	Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	92.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3280</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.675</i>	

In Table 38, the distribution of responses sheds light on the perceptions regarding the gender orientation of decisions regarding separation or divorce in Pakistan. The statistical parameters of a mean of 3.000 and a standard deviation of 1.3205 provide insight into the overall tendencies and the variability of opinions within the dataset.

The mean value of 3.000 suggests a notable inclination towards disagreement with the notion that decisions regarding separation or divorce are male-oriented in Pakistan. This mean, positioned towards the higher end of the scale, indicates that, on average, there is a prevailing belief among the respondents that such decisions are not predominantly biased towards males. However, it is important to note that while the mean leans towards disagreement, it is still quite close to the scale's midpoint, implying no overwhelming consensus among the participants.

1.3205 on the standard deviation indicates that responses vary from the mean. This shows us how big a range of opinions is within the dataset. It shows that some participants agree strongly or strongly disagree with a statement, and others have neither strong agreement nor disagreement. This variability of responses could be due to having different experiences, different views of culture, and culture's regard for divorce proceedings in Pakistan.

Among the responses, 30% of the participants disagree, constituting a significant segment rejecting the idea of male-oriented decisions. Additionally, 12.5%

strongly disagree, indicating that a further portion vehemently opposes this notion. This combined 42.5% suggests that a substantial portion of respondents firmly believe divorce decisions are not biased towards males.

Conversely, 17.5% of the respondents strongly agree, and 20% agree with the statement, comprising a total of 37.5% who perceive divorce decisions as male-oriented to some degree. This indicates a significant but not overwhelming minority who hold the view that there is a gender bias in divorce proceedings.

Interestingly, 20% of the participants remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This sizable neutral segment underscores the uncertainty or ambivalence among a considerable portion of the participants, possibly reflecting a lack of clarity or consensus regarding the gender dynamics involved in divorce decisions in Pakistan.

Table 38

The decision of separation/divorce is male-oriented in Pakistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	37.5
Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	57.5
Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	87.5
Strongly Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3205</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>3.000</i>	

In Table 39, the distribution of responses offers insight into the perception of whether children are encompassed within the realm of domestic violence in Pakistan. The statistical metrics of a mean of 2.100 and a standard deviation of 1.1048 provide a framework for understanding the central tendency and variability of opinions within the dataset.

The mean value of 2.100 indicates a moderate inclination towards agreement with the notion that children are indeed affected by domestic violence in Pakistan. Positioned slightly above the midpoint of the scale, this mean suggests that, on average, there is a prevailing belief among the respondents that children are included in the domain of domestic violence. However, it is important to note that while the mean leans towards agreement, it is still relatively close to the neutral point, implying that there may not be a unanimous consensus among the participants.

The standard deviation of 1.1048 sheds light on the variability in responses around the mean. With such a standard deviation, it becomes evident that there is a degree of diversity in opinions within the dataset. This spread suggests that while some participants strongly agree or disagree with the statement, others hold more moderate or neutral views. The variability in responses could stem from differences in personal experiences, cultural perspectives, or interpretations of the scope of domestic violence concerning children in Pakistani society.

Among the responses, 37.5% of the participants agree, and 35.5% strongly agree with the statement, indicating a substantial combined majority who believe that children are indeed impacted by domestic violence. This suggests a prevailing acknowledgment among these respondents that domestic violence extends to affect children within Pakistani households.

Conversely, 12.5% of the respondents disagree, and 2.5% strongly disagree with the statement, comprising a minority who hold the view that children are not included in the domain of domestic violence. This combined 15% suggests a smaller segment of respondents who do not perceive a direct link between domestic violence and its impact on children.

Interestingly, 12.5% of the participants remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This sizable neutral segment underscores the uncertainty or ambivalence among a significant portion of the participants, possibly reflecting a lack of clarity or consensus regarding the extent of children's involvement in domestic violence in Pakistani society.

Overall, we agree with the mean, but the standard deviation shows the heterogeneity in the observations within the dataset. The responses show a myriad of

social views and awareness at different dimensional levels of the impact that domestic violence has on children in Pakistan, from complete agreement to complete disagreement or neutrality.

Table 39

Children are included in the domain of domestic violence in Pakistan.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	15	37.5	37.5	72.5
Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	85.0
Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	97.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.1048</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.100</i>	

4.4.6 Concluding Questions

Physical abuse is the first to appear in the definition of domestic violence. Several clauses have been discovered and encountered in different interpretations. However, some interpretations seem to go against the very scheme of the bill.

The participants' perceptions regarding the language of the bill presented in the questionnaire are shown in Table 40 and are found to be consistent. The statistical parameters of 1.750 for mean and 1.1266 for standard deviation provide a better understanding of the central tendency and variability of opinion as defined by the dataset.

It is clearly shown that most participants thought Bill's language was easy to understand, with a mean value of 1.750. This mean was positioned towards the lower end of the scale, indicating that based on the respondents' responses, the language of the Bill was accessible and comprehensible. Nonetheless, it is significant that despite the bias toward agreement with ease of understanding, the mean still is very near the neutral point, indicating variation in the participants' perception.

The variability in responses around the mean is sensed by the standard deviation of 1.1266. This shows a degree of diversity in opinions in the dataset, indicating differing ease or difficulty they had struggled through while interpreting the Bill's language. Some participants found it extremely easy to understand, but some may have found it difficult or ambiguous, so their agreement or disagreement with the phrase was mixed.

Of the responses, 72.5% of people found the language of the Bill easy to understand, and therefore, a large majority felt that the language was usable and clear. This indicates that the bill is readable and clear, and stakeholders agree it should be implemented and understood.

Twelve and a half percent of respondents had difficulty understanding Bill's language. While a minority, it remains an important lesson that legal documents need clarity and simplicity so the audience can understand without misinterpretation or missing out on the meaning.

Of the 47 participants, only 15% were neutral, neither strongly agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This neutral segment may suggest a lack of strong opinions or specific experiences, influencing some participants' perceptions of the language contained in the bill.

Table 40

The clauses of the Bill (provided in the questionnaire) are easy to understand.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly Agree	26	65.0	65.0	65.0
	Agree	3	7.5	7.5	72.5
	Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	87.5
	Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>		<i>1.1266</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.750</i>	

Table 41 offers rich evidence of participants' understanding of the Bill, both its current language and interpretation. Additional context around central tendency and variability of opinion in the dataset are the statistical metrics for a mean of 1.825 with a standard deviation of 1.0099.

There is a particularly strong indication that most participants would agree with differences in the language and interpretation of the Bill, with a mean of 1.825. This means that the position towards the lower end of the scale indicates a prevailing sentiment among the respondents about discrepancies and variations in how the Bill's language was interpreted or understood. Nevertheless, our analysis reveals that while the mean is predisposed towards the idea of difference in interpretation, it is quite close to the neutral point, indicating some variation in how participants see.

This gives us a sense of the variability in responses to the mean, or standard deviation, 1.0099. This shows some level of diversity in opinions in the dataset, such that some participants agreed or disagreed with the language and interpretation of the bill. Some participants may perceive the interpretation of the statement to be substantially different from that of others, and accordingly, some participants may have a higher or lower level of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

Of the responses received, 77.5 percent of the participants reported noticing differences in language and, hence, differences in Bill's interpretation, as a majority felt

there were discrepancies or differences in understanding. It is this that suggests that interpreting legal language and masking the ambiguity or multiple interpretations of it is quite widespread.

Then, 10 percent of the respondents believe that the language and the interpretation of the Bill are the same. While a minority, this highlights the variety of views throughout the dataset, some advocating consistency and uniformity in interpreting the Bill's language.

Notably, 12.5% of the participants did not offer an opinion (were neutral and neither strongly agreed with nor disagreed with the statement). This neutral segment may reflect some lack of clear opinions and experiences, or at least uncertainty or ambivalence, among the participants regarding the language and the Bill's interpretation.

Table 41

Language and interpretation of the Bill can differ.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Agree	11	27.5	27.5	77.5
	Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	90.0
	Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.0099</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.825</i>	

Table 42 analytically disentangles the complex link between context, sociological variables, and the interpretation of the Bill, illuminating the many-sidedness of legal understanding. Mean and standard deviation stats mean of 1.925, and a standard deviation of 1.0952 give us some central tendency and variability of opinions in the dataset.

On a mean value of 1.925, we can see evidence that most participants realize how essential context is in comprehending the bill. This mean is positioned towards the lower end of the scale, which implies that the respondents' response overwhelmingly manifests a view that societal conditions of various sorts that impinge upon how the clauses of the Bill are understood and applied cannot be discounted. However, we need to bear in mind that although the mean position is weighted close to agreement with context, it is also very close to the neutral point, indicating that there may be some variability in the participants' perception.

This standard deviation of 1.0952 indicates the variability of responses around the mean. This indicates a certain level of divergence in the opinions among the participants within the dataset regarding the extent to which context influences legal interpretation. Thus, some will strongly assert the necessity of context, some at a more moderate level, and some will dissent.

72.5 percent of respondents assert that context can help determine how someone interprets the Bill, a very large majority who appreciate the complex and changeable nature that context around us can have. This, we suggest, indicates that respondents generally agreed upon the intricate interaction between legal frameworks and the wider social context in which they operated.

However, 10% of respondents disagree with the proposition and argue against the proposition of contextual influence on understanding the legal language. This, although a smaller proportion, is evidence of the diversity of perspectives in the dataset: some support that legal interpretation is independent of contextual considerations.

Interestingly, 17.5 percent of participants are neutral and neither strongly agree nor disagree with the proposition. The neutral segment may also reflect the uncertainty of some participants or reservations, and if so, it may indicate that some did not have a strong opinion or recount some specific experience that influences what they understand, which is the impact of context on legal interpretation.

Table 42

Context and society may alter the interpretation of the Bill.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	19	47.5	47.5	47.5
	Agree	10	25.0	25.0	72.5
	Neutral	7	17.5	17.5	90.0
	Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	97.5
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>		<i>1.0952</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.925</i>	

Table 43 looks at the participants' views of the efficacy of the Bill in dealing with issues concerning domestic violence and demonstrates a range of opinions across the dataset. Additional knowledge of Central Tendency and Variability of opinion among the participants is given by the statistical metrics of a mean of 2.425 and a standard deviation of 1.3376.

An obvious representation of the contesting opinion regarding whether the Bill indeed provides appropriate remedies for domestic violence can be found in that, on average, the individuals rating only responded with a value of 2.425, indicating whether they were in favor. This mean is slightly above the middle of the scale, meaning there is a (moderate) tendency towards the belief that the Bill solves most, if not all, of the problems associated with domestic violence. Nevertheless, one should mention that the average is inclined toward the correctness of the Bill, but it is still rather close to the neutral point, so the degree of variance in participants' perception is noted.

The standard deviation 1.3376 illuminates the variability of responses about the mean. The variability of responses indicates that some may strongly believe that the Bill is a complete answer to all domestic violence problems, while others may have less strong beliefs or only be undecided if the Bill does cover all problems. This diversity

of opinions could come from different interpretations of the provisions of the Bill or different experiences with domestic violence.

Among these responses, 50 percent said that the Bill fully addresses all aspects of domestic violence, which shows a substantial number of the participants who feel that the Bill is comprehensive and effective for various aspects of this complicated problem. That means there is a sense among these respondents that the Bill is fine handling the range of problems relating to domestic violence.

In contrast, 15 percent of the participants view the Bill as incomplete, so a minority group view the Bill as not adequately dealing with certain issues of domestic violence. While a much smaller proportion underscores the need for ongoing and continued examination and redrafting of legislation intended to combat domestic violence, not only in its impact on offender identification and prosecution but also in its efficacy.

Interestingly, 27.5% of respondents are neutral, neither agreeing strongly with the proposition nor disagreeing strongly. This neutral segment may indicate that a significant segment of the participants is uncertain or ambivalent about the effectiveness of the Bill, thus lacking a strong opinion or experience to provide colors to their perception of the effectiveness of the Bill.

Table 43

The Bill effectively deals with all the issues of domestic violence.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Agree	5	12.5	12.5	50.0
	Neutral	11	27.5	27.5	77.5
	Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	92.5

Strongly Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>1.3376</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.425</i>	

Table 44 shows how the participants perceive the quality of writing in the Bill, presenting small glimpses into their opinions in the dataset. Further understanding of central tendency and variability of opinions is provided by the statistical metrics of a mean of 2.325 and a standard deviation of 1.2276.

On a mean of 2.325, it is clear that participants are roughly split on how well the Bill is written. At the midpoint above the scale, this mean a moderate inclination to believe the Bill is in a reasonable condition but not perfect. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that although the mean slides towards agreement with the notion that the Bill is well written, it is still very close to the neutral point, indicating some variability in the participants' perceptions.

The standard deviation of 1.2276 reveals how responses vary regarding the mean. This variability suggests that not all participants believe the bill is written or can be written; some may fall somewhere in the middle and hold different opinions regarding the clarity of the structure of the bill's language. Differing interpretations of legal language or personal preferences for a particular writing style can cause these differences of opinion.

Respondents who responded (50%) think the bill is written as well as it could be, which means a significant part of people consider the writing quality suitable for what it was designed for. This, to me, points out a general feeling among these respondents that the Bill properly communicates its content and provisions.

On the contrary, 22.5 percent of respondents believe the Bill is not well written, implying a minority opinion that the quality of the writing of the Bill falls short of expectations. This is a smaller proportion, but it is a reminder of how important clear

and precise language in legal documents is so that it is understood and that the law is followed.

Interestingly, 27.5 percent of participants took a neutral stand—neither strongly agreed nor disagreed with the proposition. This neutral segment could represent uncertainty or ambivalence about this issue held by a good portion of the participants, possibly due to a lack of strong opinion or specific experience that shapes their opinion of Bill’s writing quality.

Table 44

The Bill has been written to the best of its ability.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	4	10.0	10.0	50.0
	Neutral	11	27.5	27.5	77.5
	Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>		<i>1.2276</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>2.325</i>	

4.5 Findings of Quantitative Data Analysis

This section presents the findings derived from a thorough analysis of the data collected by the researcher. It is crucial to note that the findings are grounded in actual data and were analyzed using Relevance Theory (RT) principles. The study meticulously examined the clarity, comprehensiveness, and contextual relevance of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill's language. The findings reveal a multifaceted view of the Bill: it effectively addresses psychological, physical, sexual, and economic aspects of

domestic violence, including the significant step of recognizing psychological abuse and extending protections to children. However, the analysis also uncovered linguistic ambiguities within the Bill that could lead to multiple, potentially conflicting interpretations, thereby complicating its enforcement and understanding. Despite Bill's efforts to use culturally sensitive and contextually relevant terminology, the study found that its complex legal language poses challenges to comprehension. According to Relevance Theory, the text's relevance diminishes if difficult to understand, suggesting that these linguistic complexities might undermine the Bill's practical effectiveness. The study's findings are systematically outlined in Roman numerals below to enhance clarity, conciseness, and convenience.

- i. The study's first objective was to conduct a linguistic analysis of the Domestic Violence Bill, focusing on exploring the various interpretations of the Bill's language. This analysis was grounded in the understanding that the Bill's language and its interpretations are two distinct entities. The study revealed that the context in which the Bill is interpreted plays a crucial role in shaping these interpretations. Different interpretations can emerge by highlighting or ignoring specific parts of the clauses, demonstrating the inherent flexibility and potential ambiguity within the legal text. The linguistic analysis delved into how the language used in the Bill could be parsed and understood differently depending on various contextual factors. Legal texts aim to be precise, but the study found room for interpretative variation even within this precision (Table 9, Table 10, Table 11, Table 12, Table 21, Table 22). This variation can lead to different law applications, influencing how the Bill is implemented and understood in real-world scenarios. To provide a deeper understanding of these interpretive nuances, the study applied Relevance Theory, a framework from pragmatics that helps explain how people derive meaning from communication. Using Relevance Theory, the study identified and analyzed various explicatures and implicatures within the Domestic Violence Bill.
- ii. The second objective of the study was to analyze how clearly and comprehensively the language of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill addresses the psychological, physical, sexual, and economic aspects of domestic violence in the context of Pakistan. The Bill's inclusion of economic abuse, described through terms like "deprivation of financial resources" and "control over

employment" (Table 21), highlights its comprehensive approach. The Bill uses inclusive language to protect all potential victims (Table 44, Table 45), including children and is crafted with cultural sensitivity to the Pakistani context. This careful use of language ensures that all forms of domestic violence are recognized, providing a robust framework for protection and prosecution. The study concluded that the definition of domestic violence in the Bill is complete and linguistically precise, reflecting a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of domestic violence.

- iii. Tables 1 and 2 show a large gap between the perception of physical abuse, in particular corporal punishment. Mean responses (e.g., 2.700 in Table 1, 2.675 in Table 2) suggest a certain ambivalence about categorizing corporal punishment as abuse strictly; socio-religious factors may influence it. According to Relevance Theory, this variability indicates that the language of the Bill is not likely to construct the cognitive environment necessary for comprehending the Bill from different cultural perspectives. The near-neutral responses suggest that the audience's socio-cultural context may not fully feel Bill's terminology, resulting in mixed readings.
- iv. Although physical abuse is well covered in the Bill, with all physical harm defined as abuse (Tables 3 and 4), the responses to the varied physical abuse show a need for more culturally sensitive language that reflects local understandings. The notion that the Bill's intent could be better communicated through terms and definitions that are closer to local values and practices, thereby making the communication both relevant and cognitively resonant for the audience, is supported by Relevance Theory.
- v. Table 7 illustrates how psychological violence has historically been overlooked and the various ways in which the manifestations of abuse can be non-physical. The Bill's phrasing presents a degree of ambivalence in the way that it introduces a degree of ambivalence in the way that the respondents, on average (mean score 2.625), are hesitant to categorize some psychological behaviors as domestic violence. The high variability in responses (standard deviation of 1.390) suggests that the interpretation of psychological abuse is highly contextual and personal. Legal language is ambiguous, and respondents may

see psychological violence in different ways based on their socio-cultural background.

- vi.** Table 8 summarizes the responses further, highlighting the limited acceptance of psychological violence as domestic abuse, with a mean of 2.625, further showing that this is an area of continued ambiguity. This is due to the variability of responses (Standard Deviation = 1.390), which agrees with the Relevance Theory's requirement of well-defined contextual cues but does not define psychological abuse clearly. Therefore, the Bill's language does not provide a clear enough guide to interpretation, leaving personal biases that shape how psychological harm is understood.
- vii.** The idea of economic abuse is a relatively new concept in the debate over domestic violence in Pakistan, which prompts uncertainty and different responses. This issue provokes polarized opinions, as seen in Tables 19-21, especially around things like "intentional deprivation" because some fear misuse of the term because of the ambiguous intent. Table 21 shows a mean response of 2.175 and a standard deviation of 1.1959, showing how participants' interpretations differ depending on their socio-economic context and personal beliefs. As a result, the idea that varying degrees of economic control are perceived as abuse is based on social and economic norms and conditions in which understanding and application vary.
- viii.** The mean responses of 3.275 and 2.925 in Tables 19 and 20, respectively, reflect a lack of consensus about whether or not the characterization of economic abuse as violence. The ambiguity may come from the Bill's legal and economic words, which have different connotations for individuals depending on their level of education, socioeconomic status, and culture. This is a challenge to the language of the Bill as per Relevance Theory, which implies that the intended audience's pragmatic expectations are not met and, consequently, generates disparate interpretations.
- ix.** This is further evidence that society divergently perceives language about sexual abuse. For example, Table 31 shows reluctance to discuss openly, marked by a mean response of 3.100, revealing cultural taboos' influence. Since Relevance Theory provides, we might find Bill's language devoid of the

required cultural foundation to sustain unambiguously, contextually appropriate interpretation, which is necessary to handle such a critical topic.

- x. The Bill's sensitivity towards sexual abuse is there, but respondents are split over the appropriateness of its language. Table 32, with a mean of 1.950, indicates a consensus that practices like the two-finger test are degrading. By focusing on the use of language that is direct and culturally sensitive, Relevance Theory stresses the relevance of this use in order to facilitate communication and minimize resistance from society to report or discuss the occurrence of sexual abuse.

Finally, though the Bill purports to address domestic violence comprehensively, Relevance Theory reveals that its language could, if need be, be improved through cultural contextualization to bring to an understanding of domestic abuse, which is acceptable from a socio-cultural standpoint in Pakistan. The bill's language would facilitate more effective communication of each aspect of abuse, which would create a clearer cognitive alignment between legislative intent and social perception.

4.6 Discussion

The initiatives taken by the United Nations and states are important in terms of the importance of domestic violence. Pakistan formulated acts and Bills to oppose domestic violence thoughtfully. Sindh was the first province to pass the Bill on domestic violence. A recent development in a long chain of legislation culminating in the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021.

Since the Domestic Violence Bill is written in legal language, making it more complex than ordinary language, the study dealt with the intricacies of the legal language, its interpretation, and implementation. The study's findings reveal several critical aspects regarding the language and interpretation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, with implications for its effectiveness and implementation. The following discussion elaborates on these findings:

4.6.1 Linguistic Analysis and Interpretation Variability

The study points to the built-in flexibility and possible ambiguity in the legal language of the Domestic Violence Bill. A linguistic analysis revealed that how the Bill is interpreted depends on the context in which it is interpreted. In legal drafting, with

different parts of the clauses drawn attention or neglected, different interpretations may be induced, implying the need for clarity. This finding emphasizes how precise language is critical in a legal text while conceding that precise language still lends itself to narrowly determinable exceptions as a product of contextual forces.

4.6.2 Application of Relevance Theory

The study used Relevance Theory to explore Bill's explicatures (direct statements) and implicatures (inferred meanings). This theoretical framework helped uncover how different stakeholders can mean different things from the same text based on their background and context. This application is important in understanding the gap between the intended and perceived meanings of the Bill and the need for more precise communication to make sure that the legal text does what it should.

4.6.3 Comprehensive Coverage of Domestic Violence

The study found that the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill covers many aspects of domestic violence, including psychological, physical, sexual, and economic abuse. This is a landmark effort in Pakistan's legal landscape with detailed coverage to provide robust protection against all forms of abuse. Nevertheless, concerns are raised about the accessibility and practical relevance of the linguistic complexity identified. However, the Bill's legal jargon is precise; it may obscure what it says to the general public and those who must enforce it.

4.6.4 Cultural Relevance and Linguistic Sensitivity

The Bill's language is also culturally sensitive, and the study highlights this cultural sensitivity in the Bill's language, which resonates with the socio-cultural realities of Pakistan. The Bill's acceptance and implementation rely on relevance. The study also points out that complex legal language may still create barriers to clear comprehension and effective communication, which may diminish its intended effect.

4.6.5 Ambiguities and Interpretation Challenges

Linguistic ambiguities in Bill's language are multiple, possibly resulting in conflicting interpretations of Bill's language. Such ambiguities can result in encodings (intended) that differ from their decodings (understood), making law enforcement and application very challenging. Interpreting these variations can render the Bill less

effective in real-world scenarios because these variations can compromise the protection the Bill is supposed to provide.

4.6.6 Socio-religious and Cultural Influences

The study suggests that the bill's implementation might be impeded by the socio-religious realities and social norms prevailing in Pakistan. The cultural and religious factors can make a difference in how the Bill is perceived and applied, which could be at odds with its legal requirements. This finding has important implications for drafting legal frameworks and drawing frameworks to tackle atrocities, particularly by requiring that they are legally sound, practically enforceable, and culturally acceptable.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the data presentation and the data analysis. It delved into linguistic analysis of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2021, highlighting multiple interpretations and their implication in real-world scenarios. Additionally, it scrutinized the ambiguities arising from language and their interpretation and misinterpretation. The data was thoroughly examined within the framework of Relevance Theory. Finally, the chapter focused on presenting the findings that emerged after the detailed data analysis and concluded by discussing the implications of these findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The researcher has used Relevance Theory to evaluate the Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Bill, 2021, according to four kinds of domestic violence viz physical abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, and sexual abuse. Exploratory research has provided the researcher with a firsthand understanding of the Bill using qualitative content analysis. Likert scale questionnaires were distributed to 40 participants, and quantitative data was collected.

The study provides the linguistic, legal, social, cultural, and practical dimensions of the Bill. The paradoxes within the process of legislating about domestic violence in a diverse society are reflected in the initial phases of the process. The Bill was approved initially, but its progress was bogged down by religious groups who said it was against Islamic doctrine and cultural norms. It emphasizes how legal reform is bound by societal attitudes and how a full discussion is required.

The Bill is linguistically analyzed to ascertain its strengths and weaknesses. A concern still exists as to the practical use of language, which deals with physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. The legal perspective is translating legislative intent into meaningful change, but societal realities make it very hard. Particular contexts have problems, and sometimes misleading words like 'baseless' and 'false' seem to overturn the spirit of the Bill. Such provisions were intended to protect vulnerable persons, but the study finds that these can be used against vulnerable persons.

Broader systemic issues, including the accessibility of legal remedies and socio-economic dynamics influencing abuse patterns, are illuminated. Despite progressive intentions, systemic deficiencies in the judicial system and entrenched gender norms may limit the Bill's impact. It was found that a systematic approach is needed to counter the irregularities in the judicial system. Law is a social practice; thus, society needs to mobilize holistically.

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

Two research questions administer the present study.

5.1.1 Research Question 1

How do different interpretations of the language used in the Domestic Violence Bill reflect varying perceptions of the physical, psychological, economic, and sexual aspects of domestic violence?

The study found the language of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill tricky and open to interpretation, according to the study. Reading legal text is complex, and people often read context-based legal text, which results in potentially conflicting interpretations of the same provisions. This analysis proves that the context and perspective of the reader will be very different between explicatures and implicatures. This discrepancy between the encoded meaning (intended by the law's drafters) and the decoded meaning (the reader's interpretation of the law) suggests that the law may be used differently. Clarity and precision are paramount in legal drafting to achieve effective effort. Effective and relevant language not only avoids ambivalence in the law but also ensures that the purposes of the law are understood and applied in the same way.

5.1.2 Research Question 2

How clearly and comprehensively does the language of the 2021 Domestic Violence Bill address the psychological, physical, sexual, and economic aspects of domestic violence in the context of Pakistan?

The Bill is a landmark legislation and a huge step forward in addressing domestic violence across Pakistan. The Bill neatly encapsulates the problems the country is confronted with on this front and covers the basis of a comprehensive legal framework meant to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. In many ways, the Bill's language is well-written and inclusive regarding what constitutes domestic violence. Additionally, the explicit inclusion of psychological violence and the protection of children is a laudable aspect, as domestic settings can encompass such a broad range of abuse.

However, the study also found some parts of the Bill's text that would make it difficult to understand and implement. However, it is important to note that the legal terminology is precise but complicated to handle by the public in general or even by some legal practitioners. This duplicity makes writing the Bill in more easily

understandable language a good idea to encourage legislative clauses to be used and understood by a wider circle. The Bill is also open to improvements and is comprehensive. Some clarifications made for ambiguous terms or more complete guidelines for enforcing the law consistently are enhancements. Translating the bill into Urdu and the major regional languages would be relevant to ensure that the protective measures resonate with the wider audience of Pakistan.

5.2 Contribution of the Results

This study provides crucial insights into the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021, in Pakistan, shedding light on the strengths and weaknesses of its language within domestic violence law. The Bill's language is fraught with ambiguities that could hinder enforcement, as terms such as "jealousy," "over-possessiveness," and "intentional deprivation" within sections related to psychological and economic abuse introduce multiple interpretations. These ambiguities are particularly significant because they create gaps between the drafters' intent and the interpretation of the law by both the judiciary and law enforcement, thereby compromising its practical application.

Additionally, the research highlights that the Bill, while attempting to address all forms of abuse—physical, psychological, sexual, and economic—does not always resonate with Pakistan's diverse cultural contexts. The varying perceptions of physical abuse, particularly corporal punishment, reflect the influence of socio-religious values on the understanding of legal provisions. This points to a critical need for cultural contextualization in the legal language to ensure social relevance and effectiveness.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the Bill's legal jargon presents a significant challenge to the general public and legal professionals in interpreting its provisions. The complexity of the language, exacerbated by the lack of linguistic precision, hinders widespread understanding and poses a barrier to its effective application, advocacy, and enforcement. Socio-religious norms also influence the interpretation of provisions related to psychological and sexual abuse, as reflected in mixed perceptions and reluctance to engage with these issues. This underscores the necessity for public education and awareness campaigns to challenge societal attitudes and ensure the Bill's effective implementation.

In light of these findings, the research advocates for substantial revisions to the Bill's language, specifically to simplify complex terminology and align it with culturally sensitive contexts. Translating the Bill into regional languages, such as Urdu, Saraiki, and Pushto, would enhance its accessibility and ensure it reaches a broader population. Addressing these linguistic and cultural challenges could significantly improve law enforcement and empower victims of domestic violence.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous pages, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The study has applied the Relevance Theory to understand the text of the Bill in the Pakistani context. However, it is recommended that the Bill should be analyzed using other theoretical frameworks, such as feminist theory and sociocultural theories, as well as discourse analysis regarding the Bill's language and what it means. For instance, the Bill may (or may not) adequately (or inadequately) deal with (or not deal with) the construct of gender in domestic violence cases.
- ii. The study sought the help of lawyers, the main population, due to their knowledge of legal matters. Nevertheless, this somewhat narrows the focus on legal professionals to the exclusion of other important groups whose opinions ought to be heard, for example, academics, instructors, and professors. Such groups could be a good source of understanding what the Bill says in its language and what it means in practice. The different experiences of various groups of people who are affected by the problem of domestic violence would enrich the understanding of the Bill and domestic violence.
- iii. The Bill should be written in simpler language because the current complex legal terminology might make it difficult for the general public to understand. The effective range of the Bill could be hindered. Making the bill simpler in English will make it easier for more people to understand and help them understand and put the outcomes of the bill into practice. In addition, the bill needs to be translated into Urdu and other major regional languages to reach and resonate with the masses.

- iv. This study provides the basis for other studies to be undertaken. These early findings should be the basis of future research extending beyond these initial findings to address the limitations described here and explore additional dimensions of the words of, and impact of, the Bill.

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APPENDIX A

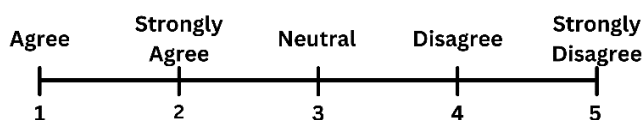
Questionnaire

SECTION 1: GENERAL

For the following statements, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

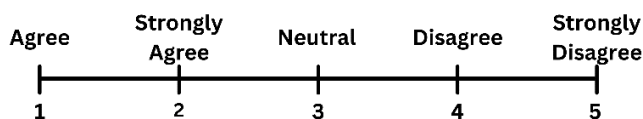
- Male members are excluded from the protection system mentioned in the given statement.

***‘WHEREAS** it is essential to establish a protection system for effective service delivery to women, children and any vulnerable person to create an enabling environment to encourage and facilitate women, children, and any vulnerable persons to freely play their desired role in society, and to provide for ancillary matters;’*



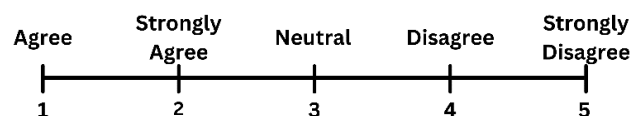
- The given statement can be interpreted in favor of the respondent (supposed perpetrator of domestic violence) due to the underlined words ‘with or without sureties.’

The court may require from the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, for preventing the commission of domestic violence.



- The underlined words ‘an appropriate person or service provider’ can be used against an aggrieved female (supposed victim of domestic violence).

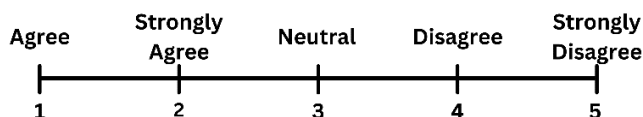
...if the aggrieved person is a child then an appropriate



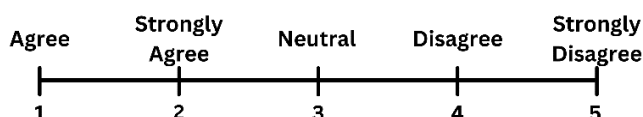
person or service provider shall be determined by the Court as per the Guardians and Wards Act 1890;

4. The given clause is in contention with the provisions of the Hudood Ordinance.

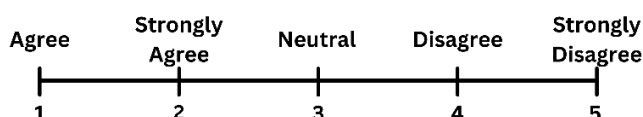
The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, any other law for the time being in force.



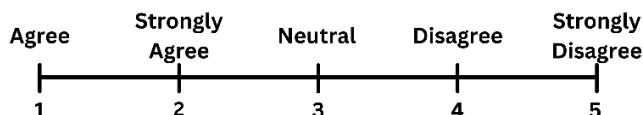
5. Regarding Pakistani culture and society, the respondent is acquitted after being pardoned by the aggrieved person or the aggrieved person's family.



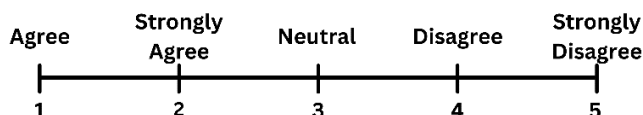
6. Given Pakistan's socio-cultural reality, the respondents return the possession of 'property, valuables, documents' to the aggrieved party.



7. The decision of separation/divorce is male-oriented in Pakistan.



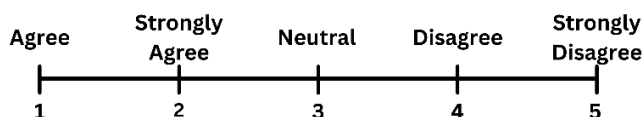
8. Children are included in the domain of domestic violence in Pakistan.



SECTION 2: PHYSICAL ABUSE

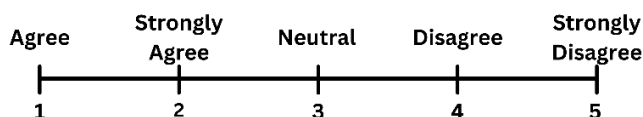
1. Given Pakistani socio-cultural reality, residing in the shelter house (provision the below statement provides) can physically harm the aggrieved person.

[Court will] ensure that the aggrieved person is provided shelter in a safe place of residence, if he or she so requires



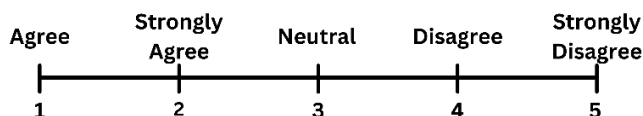
2. The given provision can be used against the aggrieved person and exact violence if the respondent stays away from the aggrieved for an extended time to avenge.

Court may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;



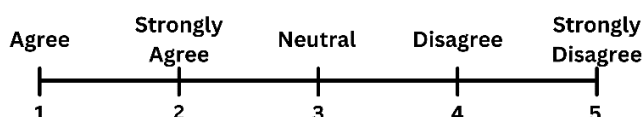
3. Affluent respondents are more likely to get away with their offenses than less affluent respondents due to the 'bailable and compoundable' nature of the given clause.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, the offence under this section shall be cognizable, bailable and compoundable.



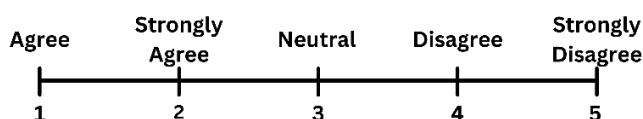
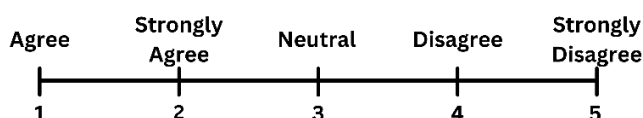
4. The given clause gives space to archaic medical tests like a two-finger test.

...to get the aggrieved person medically examined, if the person has sustained bodily injuries and forward a copy or the medical report to the Protection Committee;



5. Given Pakistan's socio-religious context, corporal punishment is considered the right of the husband or male guardian.

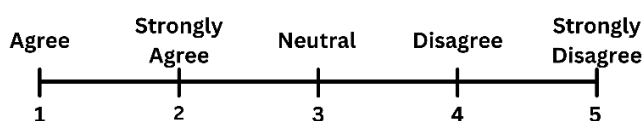
All types of physical harm are considered as "physical abuse" in Pakistan's socio-cultural and religious context.



SECTION 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

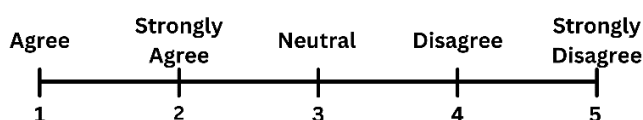
1. Given the underlined word 'baseless,' the given statement can have multiple interpretations when concerning psychological or mental abuse.

threats of divorce or second marriage on baseless accusation of insanity or infertility



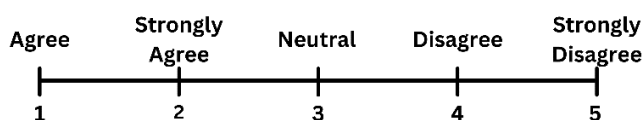
2. The given provision may be used against the aggrieved person and exact psychological violence if the respondent stays away from the aggrieved for an extended period to exact revenge.

Court may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;



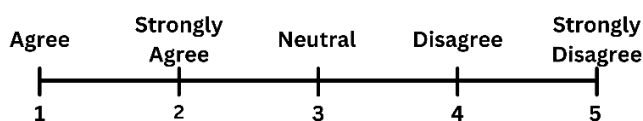
3. Given the underlined word 'false,' the statement allows the leveling of true allegations upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household.

[Psychological violence includes] bringing false allegation upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household;



4. Given that the respondent wants to get rid of the aggrieved, the given statement may be interpreted in a way that it is used against the aggrieved person.

The court [...] may pass an order directing the respondent to secure



alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 5. | In Pakistan, verbal abuse or calling names in the household is somewhat acceptable or not frowned upon. | |
| 6. | Given the socio-cultural reality of Pakistan, dispossessing an aggrieved person of the household is considered the right of the male or any other dominating member of the shared household. | |
| 7. | Stalking or starring is considered violence in Pakistani society. | |
| 8. | An aggrieved person goes through psychological turmoil while going through the ordeal of physical and medical examination in case of domestic violence. | |
| 9. | Trials of domestic violence violate the mental peace of the aggrieved person. | |
| 10. | Psychological violence is considered a kind of domestic violence in Pakistan. | |
| 11. | In Pakistan's socio-cultural dynamics verbal abuse or calling names in the household is considered violence. | |

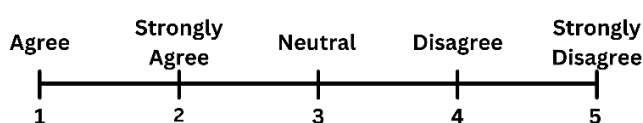
SECTION 4: ECONOMIC ABUSE

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | The given definition can have multiple interpretations. | |
|----|---|--|

“economic abuse” includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.

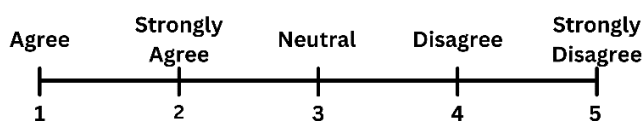
2. The following clause is successfully applicable in Pakistan.

[Court may pass an order] restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the household;



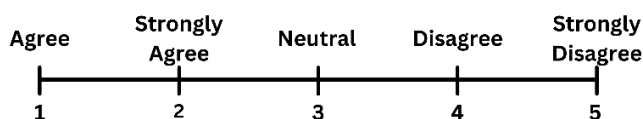
3. In the Pakistani context, the given clause can be implemented in its spirit.

[Court may pass an order] directing the respondent to secure alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.



4. The given definition may acquit the respondent of the crime by interpreting the underlined ‘intentional’ in the respondent's favor.

“economic abuse” includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.



5.	In Pakistan, the aggrieved persons can bear the expenses of the courts.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
6.	Suffering because of economic abuse is considered violence in Pakistan.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
7.	Economic deprivation or economic control is considered violence in Pakistani society.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
8.	Aggrieved persons are financially weak in Pakistan.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
9.	In Pakistan, the respondent pays the expenses of children in case of domestic violence.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
10.	In the Pakistani context, cases of domestic violence take longer to conclude and are tedious for the aggrieved person.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5

SECTION 5: SEXUAL ABUSE

1.	The given statement is complete. <i>"sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the vulnerable person or any other person;</i>	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
2.	In Pakistan, the respondent pays the medical expenses of the aggrieved party in case of sexual abuse.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
3.	In Pakistani socio-religious context, sexual abuse is open for discussion.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
4.	The two-finger test humiliates/degrades/violates the dignity of the aggrieved person.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5

SECTION 6: CONCLUDING

1.	The clauses of the Bill (provided in the questionnaire) are easy to understand.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
2.	Language and interpretation of the Bill can differ.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
3.	The Bill effectively deals with all the issues of domestic violence.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
4.	The Bill has been written to the best of its ability.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5
5.	Context and society may alter the interpretation of the Bill.	Agree Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX B

House of the Federation

SENATE OF PAKISTAN

REPORT NO. 2

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

ON

“The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021”

Presented by:

**SENATOR WALID IQBAL
CHAIRMAN**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SENATE SECRETARIAT

Subject: REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

1. Chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, have the honour to present report on "The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021", as passed by the National Assembly and introduced by Minister for Human Rights, in the Senate sitting held on 27th May, 2021. The Bill, upon introduction, was referred to the Standing Committee for consideration and report.

2. The composition of the Standing Committee is as follows:-

1.	Senator Walid Iqbal	Chairman
2.	Senator Falak Naz	Member
3.	Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani	Member
4.	Senator Gurdeep Singh	Member
5.	Senator Seemi Ezdi	Member
6.	Senator Khalida Ateeb	Member
7.	Senator Qurat ul Ain Marri	Member
8.	Senator Shahadat Awan	Member
9.	Senator Kamran Michael	Member
10.	Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed	Member
11.	Senator Abida Muhammad Azeem	Member
12.	Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo	Member
13.	Minister for Human Rights	Ex-officio Member

3. The Standing Committee on Human Rights considered the matter in its meeting held on 16.06.2021 under the Chairmanship of Senator Walid Iqbal, which was attended by the following hon'ble Members:-

1.	Senator Walid Iqbal	Chairman
2.	Senator Falak Naz	Member
3.	Senator Gurdeep Singh	Member
4.	Senator Seemi Ezdi	Member
5.	Senator Khalida Ateeb	Member
6.	Senator Qurat ul Ain Marri	Member
7.	Senator Shahadat Awan	Member
8.	Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed	Member
9.	Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo	Member
10.	Minister for Human Rights	Ex-officio Member



4. The Minister for Human Rights briefed the Committee that the purpose of introducing this Bill is to protect the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable persons who reside together at one place and are victims of domestic violence at the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) level. Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have already enacted legislation at their respective provincial levels. Ministry of Human Rights has therefore drafted a Bill to protect these rights within its territorial domain. Since Ministry of Interior is the concerned Ministry of deal with the subject of violence, therefore, No Objection Certificate was obtained from that Ministry to process the legislation. The salient features of the Bill include the following:-

- i. The Bill aims to establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, children, elders and other vulnerable persons against domestic violence in the territorial jurisdiction of Islamabad Capital Territory.
- ii. It will provide relief to victims of domestic violence who are in domestic relationship and are related to each other by consanguinity, marriage and kinship etc.
- iii. The Bill also empowers Courts to grant interim orders, protection custody and residence orders as well as award monetary relief to victims of violence at the expense of respondent.
- iv. The Bill also envisages the creation of a Protection Committee to assist the aggrieved person and process his/her application in Court.

5. Members appreciated the work of the Ministry of Human Rights towards tabling this public interest legislation.

6. After detailed deliberations, the Committee approved the following amendments to '**The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021**' :

- a) In the long title after the word 'children,' , the coma and word ', elders' shall be omitted.
- b) In the preamble, the after word 'Constitution', the words 'of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan' shall be inserted.
- c) In Clause 1, in sub-clause (2) the words 'whole of the' shall be omitted.
- d) In Clause 2, in sub-clause (1), after paragraph (vii), following new paragraph shall be inserted and the remaining paragraphs be re-numbered subsequently,-
“(viii)“**Government**” means the Federal Government ;’

e) In Clause 17, sub-clause (4), shall be omitted.

7. All Members in attendance supported and unanimously adopted the above-mentioned amendments.

8. In view of the above, the Committee recommends that **“The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021”**, as reported by the Committee may be passed by the House. *(The Bill as reported by the Committee is annexed as ‘A’ and the Bill as introduced in the Senate is annexed as ‘B’)*



(Wajeeha Riaz)
S.O/Acting Secretary Committee



(SENATOR WALID IQBAL)
Chairman Standing Committee on Human Rights

**A
Bill**

to establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, children and any vulnerable person against domestic violence.

WHEREAS the **Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan** recognizes the fundamental rights of all individuals, their dignity and their right to be treated in accordance with the law;

WHEREAS it is essential to establish a protection system for effective service delivery to women, children and any vulnerable person to create an enabling environment to encourage and facilitate women, children, and any vulnerable persons to freely play their desired role in society, and to provide for ancillary matters;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to institutionalize measures which provide necessary safeguards preventing and protecting all persons, including women, children, and any vulnerable persons, from domestic violence and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:

**PART I
PRELIMINARY**

1. Short title, extent and commencement. - (1) This Act may be called the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021.

(2) It extends to the Islamabad Capital Territory.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions. - (1) In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant to the subject or context,-

(i) **"aggrieved person"** means any woman, child, any vulnerable person or any other person who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with the respondent and who alleges to have been subjected to any act of domestic violence by the respondent;

(ii) **"child"** means any person under the age of eighteen years living in a domestic relationship with the respondent and includes any adopted, step or foster child;

(iii) **"Code"** means the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898);

(iv) **"court"** means the court of the first class Magistrate and the judge shall have all the powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure including power to grant protection, award costs, compensation or damages as may be just and proper;

(v) **"domestic relationship"** means a relationship between persons who live, or have at any point in time lived, together in a household and are either related by consanguinity, marriage, kinship, adoption, or are family members living together or for any other reason are temporarily or permanently residing in one place;

(vi) **"domestic violence"** has the same meaning as assigned to it in section 3;

- (vii) **“household”** means a household where the aggrieved person lives or at any stage has lived in a domestic relationship either singly or along with the respondent includes such a household whether owned or rented either jointly by the aggrieved person and the respondent or owned and rented by either of them, any such household in respect of which either the aggrieved person or the respondent or both jointly or singly have any right, title, interest or equity and includes such a household which may belong to the joint family of which the respondent is a member, irrespective of the fact whether the respondent or the aggrieved person has right, title, interest in such a shared household;
- (viii) **“Government”** means the Federal Government;
- (ix) **“informer”** means a person who has credible information that an offence is being committed under this Act;
- (x) **“monetary relief”** means a monetary relief which a court may order under section 9;
- (xi) **“notification”** means a notification published in the Gazette of Pakistan;
- (xii) **“prescribed”** means prescribed by the rules made under this Act;
- (xiii) **“Protection Committee”** means a Committee constituted under section 15;
- (xiv) **“Protection Officer”** means an officer designated by the Ministry of Human Rights under section 19;
- (xv) **“Protection Order”** means an order granted in terms of section 8;
- (xvi) **“respondent”** means a person who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with the aggrieved person and against whom relief has been sought under this Act;
- (xvii) **“residence order”** means an order granted in terms of section 9;
- (xviii) **“service provider”** means any such government facility or registered voluntary organization established for the protection of aggrieved person providing legal, medical, financial or any other assistance. These shall also include shelter homes; and
- (xix) **“vulnerable person”** means a person who is vulnerable due to old age, mental illness, or physical, learning, psychosocial or other disability, or for other special reason.

(2) Words and phrases not defined in this Act shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, (Act V of 1860) and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act XLV of 1898).

PART II DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3. Domestic Violence.- Domestic Violence shall mean all acts of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and economic abuse committed by a respondent against women, children, vulnerable persons, or any other person with whom the respondent is or has been in a domestic relationship that causes fear, physical or psychological harm to the aggrieved person.

Explanation I. – For the purposes of this section:-

(a) "physical abuse" means all acts whereby physical harm is inflicted upon the vulnerable persons and includes all offences under chapters XVI, XVI A, XVII, XX, XX A of the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) hereinafter referred to in this section as PPC.

(b) "emotional, psychological and verbal abuse", is where the aggrieved individual suffers from a pattern of degrading or humiliating conduct of the respondent and includes but not limited to:-

- (i) repeated exhibition of obsessive possessiveness or jealousy causing repeated invasion of the victim's privacy, liberty, integrity and security;
- (ii) insults or ridicule directed at the aggrieved person;
- (iii) threats to cause physical pain to spouse or other members of shared household;
- (iv) threats of divorce or second marriage on baseless accusation of insanity or infertility;
- (v) bringing false allegation upon the character of a female member or any member of the shared household;
- (vi) willful or negligent abandonment of the aggrieved person;
- (vii) stalking
- (viii) harassment or
- (ix) compelling the wife to cohabit with anybody other than the husband

(c) "sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the vulnerable person or any other person;

(d) "economic abuse" includes intentional deprivation of economic or financial resources or prohibition or restriction to continue access to such resources to which aggrieved person is entitled to under any law or custom for the time being in force.

Explanation II – For the purposes of determining whether any act, omission, commission or conduct of the respondent constitutes "domestic violence" under this section, the overall facts and circumstances of the case shall be taken into consideration.

4. Punishment. – (1) If an offence falling under PPC is committed in a domestic relationship the offences shall be punishable as provided under the PPC.

(2) If the offence committed does not fall under the PPC, the act of domestic violence shall be punishable with simple imprisonment of a maximum period of three years and not less than six months depending on the gravity of the act of domestic violence committed, and a fine of one hundred-thousand Rupees and minimum of twenty-thousand Rupees shall also be paid as compensation to the aggrieved person.

(3) In default of payment of fine, the court may award simple imprisonment of three months.

(4) Whoever aids or abets the commission of an offence of domestic violence shall be punished with the same punishment provided for the offence.

PART III PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

5. Petition to the Court. - (1) An aggrieved person or any other person authorized by the aggrieved person may present a petition to the Court within whose jurisdiction;

- (a) the aggrieved resides or carries on business; or
- (b) the place where the respondent and aggrieved last resided together.

(2) The court shall fix the first date of hearing, which shall not exceed seven days from the date of the receipt of the petition by the court.

(3) Upon receipt of the petition, the court shall, with or without issuing an interim order, issue a notice upon the person complained against and call upon him/her to show cause within seven days of receipt of notice as to why a protection order shall not be made against him/her for committing an act of domestic violence as alleged in the petition.

(4) The petition made under sub-section (1) shall be decided within a period of ninety days and any adjournment shall be granted for reasons to be recorded in writing by the Court.

6. Right to reside in a household. - (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the aggrieved person, shall have the right to reside in the shared household, whether or not the aggrieved person has any right, title or beneficial interest in the same.

(2) The aggrieved person may choose to reside in the house, or in an alternative accommodation to be arranged by the respondent as per the financial resources under court's order, or in a shelter home arranged by any service provider.

7. Power to grant interim order. - (1) In any proceeding under this Act, the court may pass such interim order at any time and stage of the petition as it deems just and proper.

(2) If the court is satisfied that a petition *prima facie* discloses that the respondent has committed an act of domestic violence or that there is a likelihood that the respondent may commit an act of domestic violence, it may issue order on the basis of an affidavit of the aggrieved person or any other evidence or material, before the court as provided under sections 8, 9, and 10 against the respondent.

8. Protection orders and residence orders. - (1) The court on being satisfied that *prima facie* domestic violence has taken place or is likely to take place may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person and direct the respondent,—

- (a) not to commit any further act of domestic violence;
- (b) not to have any communication in any form or manner including personal, oral or written, electronic or telephonic or cellular with the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;
- (c) to stay away from the aggrieved person, with or without exceptions;
- (d) to stay at such distance from the aggrieved person as may, keeping in view the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, as determined by the Court;
- (e) to wear an ankle or wrist bracelet GPS tracker for any act of grave violence or likely grave violence which may endanger the life, dignity or reputation of the aggrieved person; and
- (f) to move out of the house in case of an act of grave violence if the life, dignity or reputation of the aggrieved person is in danger.

(2) In addition to the order under sub-section (1), or otherwise, the court on being satisfied that domestic violence has taken place may pass an order:-

- (a) restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the household;
- (b) restraining the respondent or any of his/her relatives from entering the household; and
- (c) directing the respondent to secure alternative accommodation for the aggrieved person or if the circumstances so require to pay rent for the same.

(3) The court may pass any other direction which it may deem reasonable to protect and provide for the safety of the aggrieved person or any child of such aggrieved person.

(4) The court may require from the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, for preventing the commission of domestic violence.

(5) While making an order under sub-sections (1), (2) or (3), the court may also pass an order directing the officer in charge of the nearest police station to give protection to the aggrieved person or to assist the aggrieved person or the person making an application on his or her behalf in the implementation of the order.

(6) While making an order under sub-section (2), the court may impose on the respondent obligations relating to the discharge of rent or other payments, having regards to the financial needs and resources of the parties.

(7) The court may direct the officer in charge of the police station in whose jurisdiction the court has been approached to assist in the implementation of the protection order.

(8) The court may direct the respondent to return to the possession of the aggrieved person any property, valuables or documents to which the aggrieved person is entitled.

(9) The court shall in all cases where it has passed any order under this section, order that a copy of such order, shall be given to the parties to the application, the officer in charge of the police station in the jurisdiction of which the court has been approached as well as to the service provider located within the local limits of the jurisdiction of the court:

9. Monetary relief.- (1) The court may, at any stage of the trial, may pass interim order directing the respondent to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and losses suffered by the aggrieved person and any child of the aggrieved person as a result of the domestic violence and such relief may include, but is not limited to—

- (a) compensation for suffering as a consequence of economic abuse to be determined by the court;
- (b) loss of earning;
- (c) medical expense;
- (d) the loss caused due to the destruction, damage or removal of any property from the control of the aggrieved person; and

- (e) the maintenance for the aggrieved person as well as children, if any, including an order under or in addition to an order of maintenance under any law for the time being in force.

(2) The respondent shall pay monetary relief granted to the aggrieved person within the period specified in the order made under sub-section (1).

(3) Upon failure on part of the respondent to make payment in terms of the order under sub-section (2), the court may direct an employer or debtor, of the respondent, to directly pay the aggrieved person or to deposit with the court a portion of the wages or salaries or debt due to or accrued to the credit of the respondent, which amount may be adjusted towards the monetary relief payable by the respondent.

10. Custody orders.- Notwithstanding anything in any law for the time being in force, the court may, at any stage of the petition for protection order or for any other relief under this Act, grant temporary custody of an aggrieved person to an appropriate person or authority.

Provided that if the aggrieved person is a child then an appropriate person or service provider shall be determined by the Court as per the Guardians and Wards Act 1890 (VIII of 1890);

Provided that if the aggrieved person is an adult custody shall be granted to a service provider or some other person to any person or service provider in accordance with the will of the aggrieved person.

11. Duration and alteration of interim, protection and residence orders. - (1) The interim order made under section 7, the protection order made under section 08 and the custody order under section 10 shall remain in force until the aggrieved person applies for discharge of such order.

(2) If the court on receipt of an application at any stage from the aggrieved person or the respondent is satisfied that there is a change in the circumstance requiring alteration, modification or recalling of any order made under this Act, it may, for reasons to be recorded in writing pass such order, as it may deem appropriate.

(3) The residence order shall remain in force till altered by the court.

(4) Nothing contained in sub-sections (1) and (2) shall prevent an aggrieved person from making a fresh application after the previous order has been discharged.

12. Penalty for breach of an interim or protection order by the respondent. - (1) A breach of protection order, or of the interim order or of the residence order, or of a custody order by the respondent shall be an offence and shall be punishable with imprisonment of one year and with fine of one hundred thousand Rupees which shall be paid to the aggrieved person.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, the offence under this section shall be cognizable, bailable and compoundable.

13. Appeal. - (1) Any person aggrieved by order of the court under Section 12 may file an appeal to the court of Sessions within thirty days of the passing of the order of sentence and the Court of Sessions shall decide the appeal within sixty days.

(2) Any person aggrieved by the final decision of the Court may, within ten days of the final Judgment or order of the Court prefer an appeal to the Court of Sessions.

14. Procedure. - (1) All proceedings under this Act shall be governed by the Code.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1) the Court may, for reasons to be recorded, dispense with any provision of the Code and follow such procedure as it may deem fit in the circumstances of the case.

PART IV PROTECTION COMMITTEE AND PROTECTION OFFICER

15. Protection Committee. - (1) The Ministry of Human Rights shall, by notification in the official Gazette, constitute a Protection Committee for the purposes of this Act within three months of the passage of the Act.

(2) A Protection Committee shall comprise of a representative of the Family Protection Shelter, a representative of the National Commission on the Status of Women, a medical doctor or psychologist or psycho-social worker, a law officer, and a police officer not below the rank of Inspector, preferably female, as may be prescribed by the rules and the Protection Officer who shall also act as the Secretary of the Protection Committee.

(3) One half of the total members of the Protection Committee shall constitute the quorum.

16. Duties and functions of Protection Committee. - The Protection Committee may:-

- (a) inform the aggrieved person of his/ her rights provided under this Act or any other law for the time being in force and the remedies and the help that may be provided;
- (b) assist the aggrieved person in obtaining any medical treatment necessitated due to the domestic violence;
- (c) if necessary, and with the consent of the aggrieved person, assist the aggrieved person in relocating to a safer place acceptable to the aggrieved person, which may include the house of any relative or family friend or other safe place;
- (d) assist the aggrieved person, by assigning the Protection Officer, in the preparation of and filing of any petition or report under this Act, the Code or any other law for the time being in force;
- (e) keep official record of the incidents of domestic violence in its area of jurisdiction;
- (f) maintain record of the names and contact details of the service provider from whom the aggrieved person may seek further help and assistance including shelter;
- (g) Perform such other duties that may be assigned to the Protection Committee under this Act or the rules made there under.

17. Powers, privileges and immunities of Protection Committee. - (1) The members of the Protection Committee shall be deemed to be public servant within the meaning of Section 21 of the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860).

(2) The Protection Committee shall be housed in Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women under Ministry of Human Rights.

(3) The Ministry of Human Rights shall provide a Secretariat, under the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women, as well as necessary staff supported by a budget required for the establishment and functioning of the Secretariat.

18. Delegation of functions and powers. - The Protection Committee may delegate any of its functions and powers to any of its member or members.

19. Protection Officer. - (1) The Ministry of Human Rights shall, by notification in the official Gazette, designate a team of Protection Officers, one male and one female for the purposes of this Act. Protection Officers are to be appointed in the prescribed manner within one month of the framing of the rules pursuant to Section 24 of this Act.

(2) The Secretariat of the Protection Committee shall provide support to the Protection Officer in exercising its functions.

(3) The Protection Officers shall not be a part of the investigation process but shall assist the aggrieved person in accordance with provisions of the Act.

20. Duties of Protection Officer. - It shall be the duty of the Protection Officer;

- (a) to file an application for obtaining a protection order under section 9, if so desired by the aggrieved person.
- (b) to make a domestic incident report to the Protection Committee, in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed, upon receipt of a complaint of domestic violence and forward copies thereof to the National Commission for the Status of Women;
- (c) to make an application in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed to the court, if the aggrieved person so desires, claiming relief for issuance of a protection order;
- (d) to ensure that the aggrieved person is provided legal aid;
- (e) to maintain a list of all service providers providing legal aid or counseling, shelter homes and medical facilities in a local area within the jurisdiction of the court;
- (f) to make available a safe place of residence, if the aggrieved person so requires and forward a copy of his report of having lodged the aggrieved person in a shelter home to the Protection Committee;
- (g) to get the aggrieved person medically examined, if the person has sustained bodily injuries and forward a copy of the medical report to the Protection Committee;
- (h) to ensure that the order for monetary relief under section 10 is complied with and executed in accordance with the procedure prescribed; and
- (i) to perform such other duties as may be assigned to him.

21. Service Providers. – (1) In any proceeding under this Act, the court or the Protection Committee may engage the services of a service provider.

(2) Service provider shall have all the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the Protection Committee.

(3) A service provider shall have the power to;-

- (a) record the domestic incident in a prescribed form if the aggrieved person so desires, and forward a copy thereof to the Protection Officer having jurisdiction in the area where the domestic violence took place;
- (b) get the aggrieved person medically examined and forward a copy of the medical report to the Protection Officer within the local limits of which the domestic violence took place;
- (c) ensure that the aggrieved person is provided shelter in a safe place of residence, if he or she so requires and forward a report of the lodging of the aggrieved person in a safe place of residence to the Protection Committee within the local limits of the place where the domestic violence took place; and
- (d) provide the aggrieved person with any aid or assistance if he or she may so require.

22. Protection of actions taken in good faith. - No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against any Protection Committee, Protection Officer or service provider for anything which is done in good faith or purported to be done under this Act.

PART V MISCELLANEOUS

23. Act not in derogation of any other law. - The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, any other law for the time being in force.

24. Power to make rules. - Ministry of Human Rights may by notification in the Official Gazette make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

25. Removal of difficulties. - If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any provision of this Act, the Federal Government may make an order to remove the said difficulty.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

The Constitution of Pakistan, through the Fundamental Rights enshrined in it, mandates the state of Pakistan to protect its citizens from unlawful deprivation of life and liberty and holds inviolable the dignity of every person. It also declares all citizens to be equal before the law and prohibits any discrimination based on sex. These rights to life, dignity and non-discrimination are violated through acts of domestic violence, which are systematic and widespread and occur regardless of age or socio-economic status. Besides, under UN HR Conventions ratified by the Government of Pakistan particularly Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) states are obligated to take legislative measures for protection of women in domestic life. Through this Act a legal an institutional framework has been proposed for the territorial jurisdiction of Islamabad Capital Territory so that individuals who become victims of domestic violence are provided legal protection, and relief and the perpetrators of this offence are punished. Such legislation has been made at all provincial levels.

(Dr. Shireen M. Mazari)
Minister for Human Rights