



AWARE GIRLS



SURVEY ON THE PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF PEOPLE TOWARDS DOMESTIC ABUSE IN PAKISTAN

**BY:
AWARE GIRLS
AND
YOUNG FEMINISTS MOVEMENT**

**In Collaboration with:
Mamacash**

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AWARE GIRLS



CONTENTS

Description	Page No.
About Aware Girls	03
Background of the Survey	03
Main Findings of the Survey	04
Responses of the participants of the Survey	05
Discussion	10
Recommendations	12



AWARE GIRLS



ABOUT AWARE GIRLS

Aware Girls is young women led organization founded in 2002, working for the gender equality and peace through empowering young people specifically young women as agents of change, y advocating for equal access of young women to education, health, employment, governance, political participation, decision making, and other social services and through creating conducive environment for young women and girls to exercise their human rights.

Aware Girls is based in Peshawar and have outreach to all parts of Pakistan. The Board of Directors and team of the organization is comprised by young women who work directly with young women and girls in the community as well as with multiple stakeholders. The main thematic areas of the organization are Human Rights, Addressing Violence Against women, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Political and Economic Empowerment of women, and mainstreaming women in peacebuilding. The main strategies used by Aware Girls are group formation of young women and girls, capacity building, Advocacy, campaigning, Peer Education and Use of Social Media.

BACKGROUND OF THE SURVEY

Violence against women is one of the most important issues of women in Pakistan which restricts women from living a healthy and fuller life. The statistics and media reports shown an increasing trend of violence against women. The prevalence of reported cases of violence against women in Pakistan has increased by 7 per cent as compared to 2011. Among total number of VAW incidents, 3,153 cases were reported in Punjab, 1,027 in Sindh, 283 in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and 78 cases were reported in Balochistan. The monitored stories clearly revealed that younger and married women were more often a target of violence against women. The statistics identifies below 18 years of age as most susceptible to violence. Around 59 per cent of the victims were below 18 years of age, 31 per cent were 19-36 years old and 9 per cent were over 36 years of age.

To address the issue of violence against women and to challenge the patriarchal norms and values which endorse violence against women, Aware Girls in support of Mamacash launched a program to strengthen the leadership skills of girls and to educate them about their Human Rights so that they can speak up on the issue of violence against women, can break the silence around it, can highlight women's rights issues and can work towards bringing the attitude and policy level change required for protecting women against violence. Girls Power Clubs were established in five districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province under the project whose capacity was strengthened and mentorship was provided to them so that they can take leadership roles in addressing violence against women in their communities. One of the group's members from Peshawar Girls Power Club-II named themselves as "Young Feminists Movement"- they are working for promoting awareness about gender equality and equal rights for everyone. With the support of Aware Girls Young Feminists Movement conducted this survey to find out the perception and attitude of people towards violence against women so that the results can be used for developing comprehensive programs on the issue of violence against women.



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MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY:

Aware Girls conducted a small survey to find out the general perception and attitudes of people towards the issue of domestic violence mostly intimate partner violence. The survey was conducted for the purpose of designing social media campaigns for addressing the issue of violence against women through sensitization, awareness raising and educational activities. The responses were collected through social media so only perspectives of those who have access to social media and can read have been captured.

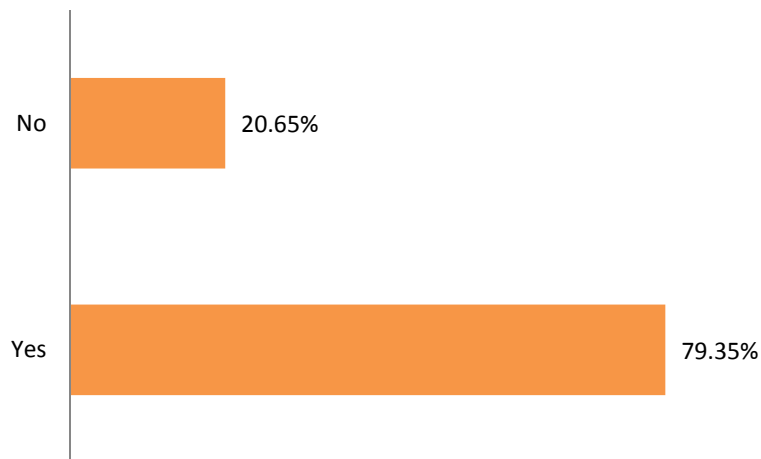
The highlights of the Survey are

- **20.65%** don't consider domestic abuse as an important issue for Pakistan
- **5.43%** believe that husbands have the right to verbally abuse their wives while **18.48%** responded believed that husbands can occasionally verbally abuse their wives
- **10.87%** respondents believed that husbands have the right to beat their wives while **25%** believed that husbands can occasionally beat their wives
- **52.17%** responded that a husband can beat his wife if she disobeys her, **26.09%** responded that a husband can beat her wife if she does not take care of her husband, **21.4%** responded that a husband can beat her wife if she goes out of the home without his permission, while **8.70%** marked the option if wife visits to the male doctor without husband's permission (These responses were also marked by those who had previously responded that a husband can't beat his wife).
- **7.61%** believed that women should not take legal help in case of domestic abuse while **32.61%** responded that women should go for legal aid only when the case is very severe.
- **61.96%** responded that men should be punished for beating or verbally abusing their wives, **9.78%** responded that men shouldn't be punished for beating or verbally abusing their wives or sisters, **21.17%** responded that taking the matter to court tarnishes the honor of family, the matter should be resolved within the family and **5.43%** responded that it's not a big issue and women should compromise.
- In response to what should be done with a girl who runs away with her home to get married with someone **31.52%** responded that the matter should be dismissed silently, **28.26%** responded that she should be congratulated and supported, while **7.61%** responded that she should be killed
- **80.43%** were of the view that government should open Shelter homes for women who are either victims or at the risk of domestic abuse while **19.56%** were against shelter homes
- **92.39%** said they want laws against domestic abuse in Pakistan while **7.61%** showed disagreement for laws against domestic violence



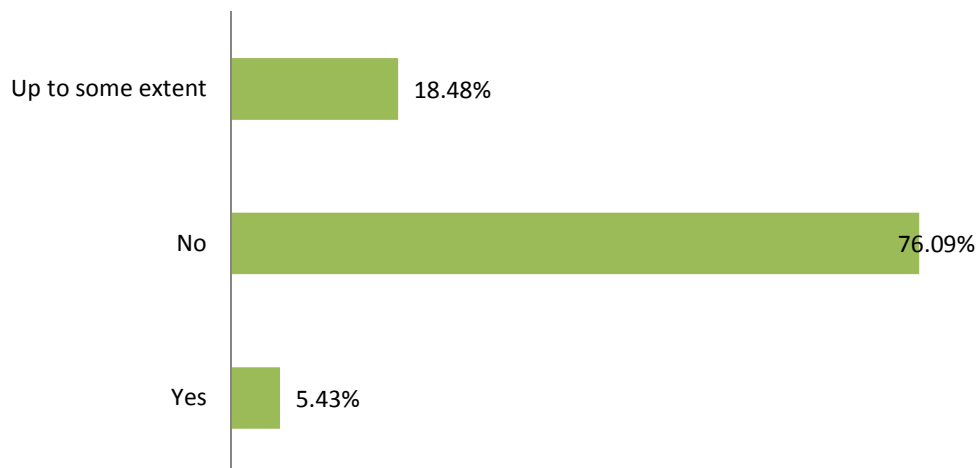
RESPONSES OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE SURVEY

Question 1: Do you think violence against women is an important issue of Pakistan?



Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	79.35%
No	20.65%

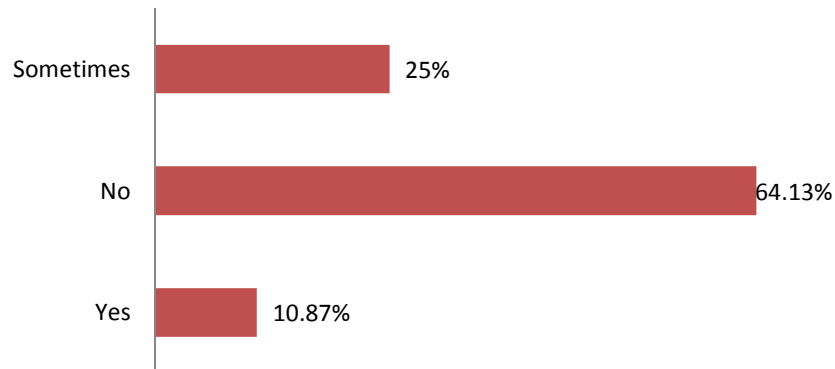
Question 2: Do you think husbands have the right to verbally abuse their wives?



Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	5.43%
No	76.09%
Up to some extent	18.48%

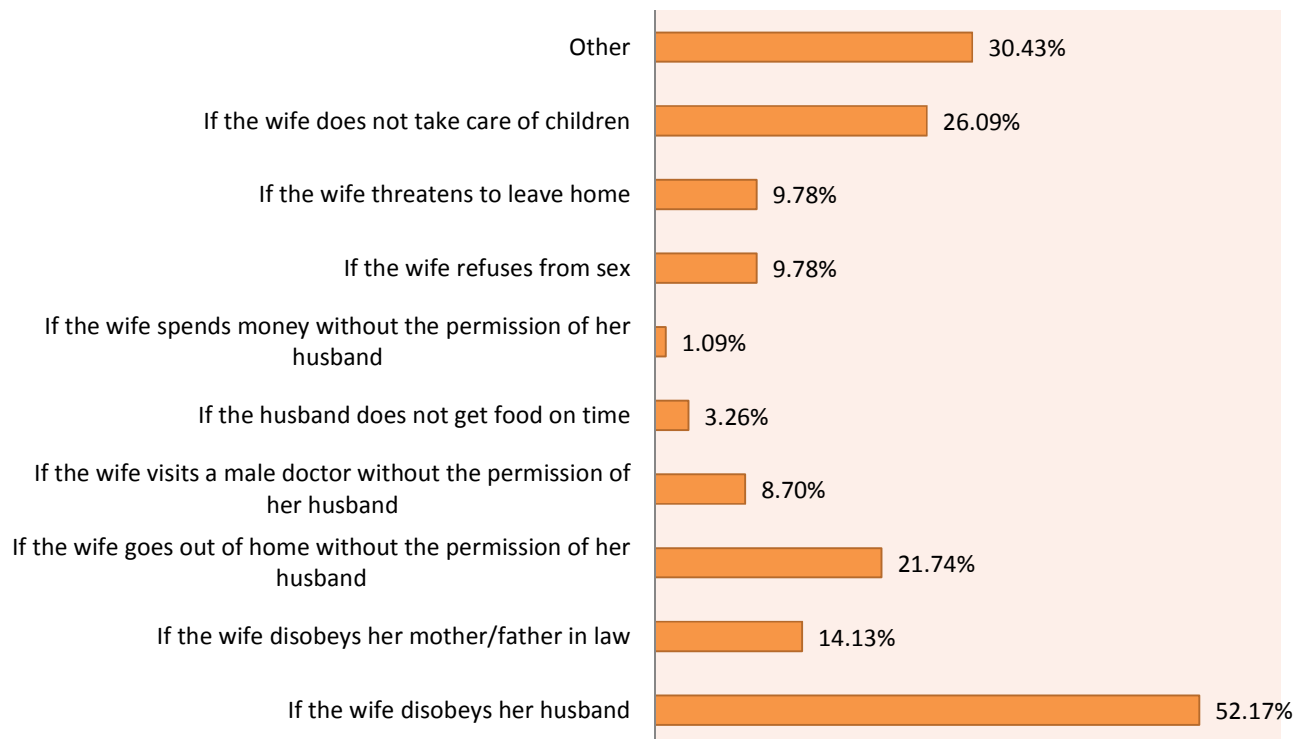


Question 3: Do you think a husband have the right to beat his wife?



Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	10.87%
No	64.13%
Sometimes	25%

Question 4: In your opinion in which circumstances a husband can either beat his wife or can verbally abuse her?



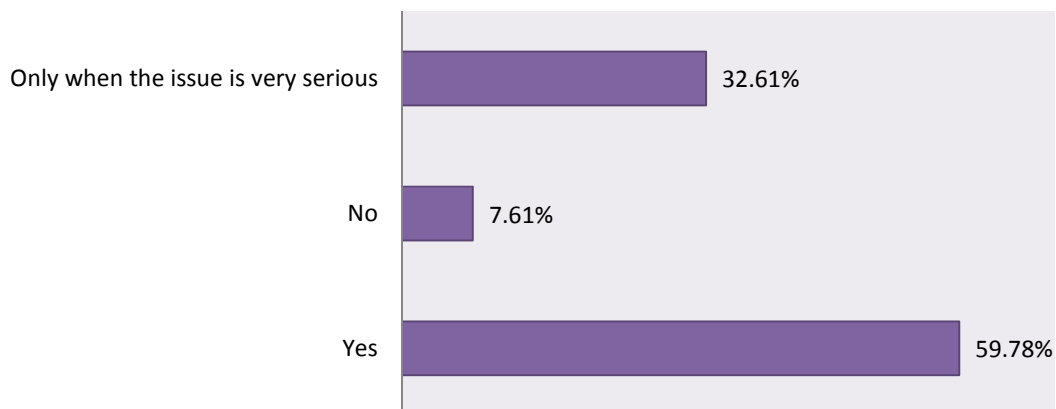


Answers Choices	Responses
If a wife disobeys her husband	52.17%
If the wife disobeys her mother/father in law	14.13%
If the wife goes out of home without the permission of her husband	21.74%
If the wife visits a male doctor without the permission of her husband	8.70%
If the husband does not get food on time	3.26%
If the wife spends money without the permission of her husband	1.09%
If the wife refuses from sex	9.78%
If the wife threatens to leave home	9.78%
If the wife does not take care of children	26.09%
Other	30.43%

Other:

1. If she misbehaves with her husband or others for no reason and is always busy in building conspiracy plots in her own home
2. Men shouldn't be allowed to beat their wives or shout at them in any case/ No reason, divorce should be given if reconciliation is impossible (**14.13%**)
3. If she has illicit relationships with other **men (5.43%)**
4. If a women talks to another men or travel with another men
5. If she has some medical problems then she can refuse to be in the bed with his husband.
6. Beating is not right, but both husband and wife can shout at each other

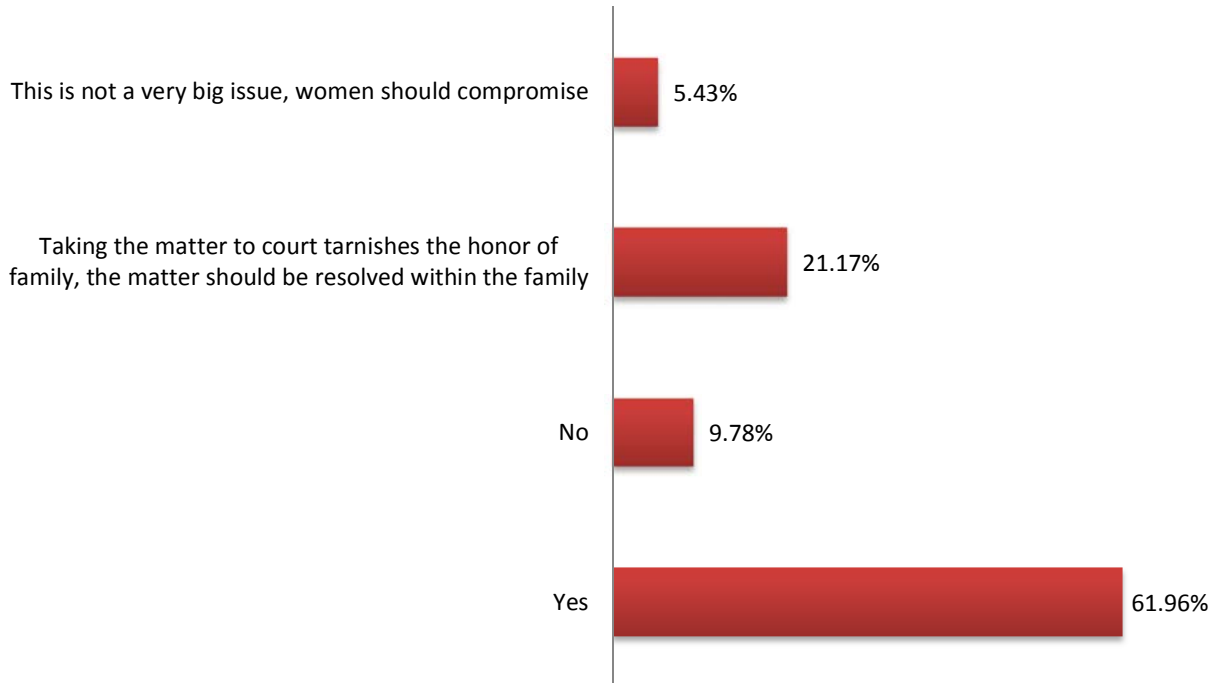
Question 5: Do you think women should have the right to take legal support against domestic abuse?



Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	59.78%
No	7.61%
Only when the issue is very serious	32.61%



Question 6: Do you think men who beat or verbally abuse their wives or sisters should be legally punished?



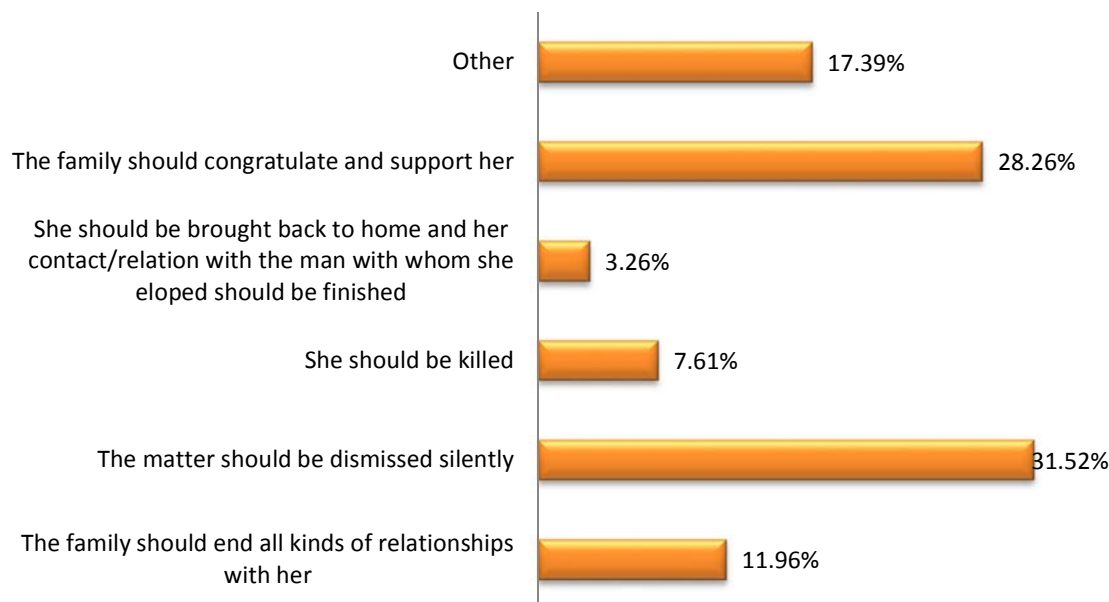
Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	61.96%
No	9.78%
Taking the matter to court tarnishes the honor of family, the matter should be resolved within the family	21.17%
This is not a very big issue, women should compromise	5.43%

Comments:

1. Proper Standard Operating Procedures should be applied. So that just claim of a slap by wife don't land husband into jail, but in cases of severe violence harsh measures should be taken
2. There shouldn't be punishment on verbal abuse but on physical abuse there should be punishment (2 Responses)
3. If courts will give punishment, then the wife won't be normalized and the husband will also hate her therefore the matter should be solved by counseling
4. A man should never be allowed to be abusive to women but in case of



Question 7: In your opinion, what should be done to a woman who run away from home (elope) to marry someone?



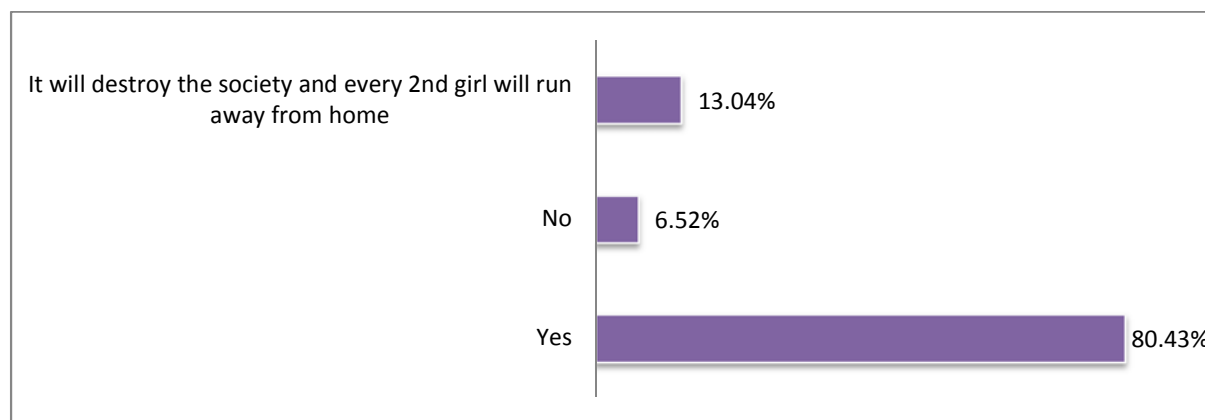
Answers Choices	Responses
The family should end all kinds of relationships with her	11.96%
The matter should be dismissed silently	31.52%
She should be killed	7.61%
She should be brought back to home and her contact/relation with the man with whom she eloped should be finished	3.26%
The family should congratulate and support her	28.26%
Other	17.39%

Others:

1. The relationship between both should be accepted
2. The family should arrange their marriage before letting the situation reach the point of elopement
3. She should be helped and protected
4. She should be brought back and the marriage should be arranged for them in an honorable way
5. If the person with who she eloped is suitable then honorable marriage should be organized for them
6. She should be brought back and the marriage should be arranged for them in an honorable way, but there is no need to congratulate her
7. Islam has given the right of marriage with choice so it will be great to organize marriage for them



Question 8: DO you think the government should build shelter homes for women who are either victims of domestic abuse or who don't feel safe in their homes?

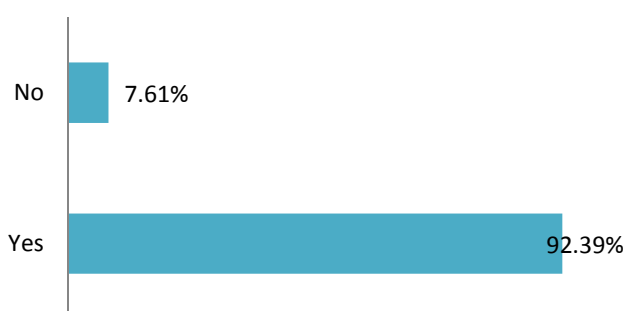


Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	80.43%
No	6.52%
It will destroy the society and every 2 nd girl will run away from home	13.04%

Comments:

1. Government should build shelter homes but the Shelter Home is another hub of Prostitution. Shelter homes should be tackled as shelter homes
2. Shelter homes should maintain high standards and check and balance. Shelter homes are used as Hubs of Drug Supply, women smuggling and prostitution
3. Men should guarantee that he won't be abusive to his wife

Q 9: Do you think Pakistan should make laws against domestic abuse?



Answers Choices	Responses
Yes	92.39%
No	7.61%

Comments:

Societies should be educated about women's dignity and respect



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Discussion:

This survey reflects the common attitudes present in Pakistani society about domestic abuse and the strong patriarchic notions of the society. The Research Reports and media reports of 2012 and 2013 has made it very clear that violence against women is a very big issue in Pakistan, there is an increasing trend of violence against women. According to Thomas Reuters Foundation around 90% of the women of Pakistan face domestic abuse while thousands of women get killed in the name of honor each year but 20.65% of the survey participants responded that violence against women is not an important issue for Pakistan. It reflects the general patriarchal notion of the society which sideline women, the same attitude is reflected in programing, decision making and peace building process where women are sidelined.

As mentioned, 90% of the women face domestic abuse but most of the perpetrators enjoy impunity, 35.87% of the respondents said it's OK for husband to beat their wives, 10.87% said it is right of men to beat his wife while 25% responded that men can occasionally beat their wives. Though 64.13% of the participants were of the view that men don't have the right to beat their wives but in the next question in which we asked in which circumstances men can beat their wives only **14.13%** said men can't beat their wives in any situation while all other respondents presented one or other excuse for beating the wife. So we can assume that actually **85.87%** of the respondents endorsed domestic violence. **52.17%** responded that a husband can beat his wife if she disobeys her, **26.09%** responded that a husband can beat her wife is she does not take care of her husband , **21.4%** responded that a husband can beat her wife s she goes out of the home without his permission, while **8.70%** marked the option if wife visits to the male doctor without husband's permission. These responses clearly points out towards the gender roles expected from women, and upon the unfulfilled to these roles the society accepts violence against women, so violence is used as a tool to push women in their gender boxes. The two main gender expectations for women according to this survey are "obedience of husband" and "restricted mobility".

In Pakistan, there are nil or insufficient mechanism of protection for women who are either victims of domestic abuse or at the risk of domestic abuse. There are limited shelter homes in each province where women live under strict surveillance and restricted mobility. Women who face domestic abuse usually don't have family support to fight their case in the court and they don't have any means of incomes by their own which make them economically dependent on the same family which is unwilling to support the plight of women in court. In our survey 32.61% responded that women should get legal help only when the case is very severe as taking the matter to court will tarnish family's honor, 7.61% responded that women should not take legal help in case of domestic abuse.

Though in Pakistan men enjoy impunity for domestic abuse as there isn't any system of legal protection for women against domestic abuse but **61.96%** respondents of our survey said that men should be punished for beating or verbally abusing their wives, **9.78%** responded that men shouldn't be punished for beating or verbally abusing their wives or sisters, **21.17%** responded that taking the matter to court tarnishes the honor of family, the matter should be resolved within the family and **5.43%** responded that it's not a big issue and women should compromise. The responses show the trend of impunity for men as well as the wish for having a system of protection for women against domestic abuse. A large number of respondents however preferred to keep the "respect" of family rather than protecting women from abuse. Some of the respondents didn't consider slapping wife as a matter of legal punishment. One of the respondents said, "women



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should not be beaten in any case, we are not servants”; this statement points out towards the patriarchal attitude that the one who is weaker or sub-ordinate in position can be beaten. Therefore, there is a need to educate and sensitize people about equality for everyone, as challenging patriarchy is not just about rights for women, it is about equality for everyone.

In response to what should be done with a girl who run away with home to get married with someone **31.52%** responded that the matter should be dismissed silently, **28.26%** responded that she should be congratulated and supported, while **7.61%** responded that she should be killed. The report of Thomas Reuter Foundation has mentioned above 1000 reported honor killings in Pakistan, the attitude behind honor killing can be found reflected in this survey. When a woman decided about her own partner it is considered as a matter of dis-honor and to restore honor it is a common practice to kill the woman who had decided for her own partner.

The survey asked about the opinion of the respondents about shelter homes, **80.43%** were of the view that government should open Shelter homes for women who are either victims or at the risk of domestic abuse while **19.56%** were against shelter homes; out of which **13.04%** were of the view that shelter homes will destroy the social fabric of our culture and it will promote the idea of running away from home for girls. In the comments the participants also expressed that shelter homes are used as hub of prostitution rather than protection.

The last question of the survey was if laws should be developed against domestic abuse, interestingly **92.39%** said they want laws against domestic abuse in Pakistan while **7.61%** showed disagreement for laws against domestic violence. However, the respondents also suggested educational programs on women rights and women’s dignity. The high percentage of people willing to have laws on domestic violence shows that the society is ready for a comprehensive law against domestic abuse.

Recommendations:

1. Silence around violence against women should be broken, women should be encouraged to speak about their experiences and to highlight the issue
2. Both preventive and curative measures should be taken i.e. awareness raising, gender sensitization, challenging the gender norms which lead to objectification of women and gender base violence. Curative measures such as making shelter home, legal aid, medical aid, and counseling available and accessible to women
3. Legal systems of protection and shelter homes should be established to protect women who are either victims of domestic abuse or at the risk of domestic abuse
4. Helplines should be established and referral networks should be developed by the civil society to make information, counseling and referral services such as legal aid, medical aid and shelter homes accessible to women in despair
5. Capacity of activists should be strengthened in how to help victims of gender base violence and to enable them understand what makes it difficult for women to seek help
- 6.



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7. School curriculums which reinforce gender norms should be revised and lessons on human equality and dignity should be included in it
8. Awareness on Gender Equality and Human Rights should be raised among all sections of society
9. Programs on educating young men and women should be developed with the aim of sensitizing them on gender base violence, to enable them understand the patterns of violence, it's impact on women
10. The myths around violence against women should be broken down because it will help the societies in understanding the patterns of gender base violence
11. New technologies should be used such as Social media and Digital Stories to sensitize communities and policy makers on the issue of gender base violence
12. The Civil Society organizations should advocate for strict implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women
13. Multi-dynamics programs of women empowerment should be developed instead of seeing the issue in isolation such as political empowerment of women, economic empowerment of women and human rights protection of women