

Women and Family Conflicts in Rural Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Nawaz Khan (Corresponding Author)	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal Dir Upper, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. nawazsocio@sbbu.edu.pk
Dr. Sameer Ul Khaliq Jan	Lecturer, Department of Social Work, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal, Dir Upper, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. sameer@sbbu.edu.pk
Muhammad Adnan	Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal, Dir Upper, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Abstract: *Women have historically played a significant role in contributing to the peace and security of society. However, in certain instances, they can become a source of familial and communal conflicts, particularly at the micro level. These conflicts vary in intensity, ranging from minor tensions to outright violent aggression. In the rural areas of Pakhtun culture, a segment of the population has grappled with such conflicts for an extended period. This research examined the role of in-laws in the emergence of family conflicts in the rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data. These data sets were collected, organized, and analyzed independently before being integrated using Creswell's (2014) concurrent strategy, employing a side-by-side comparison. Quantitative information was obtained from a sample of 354 women through simple random sampling. Additionally, 25 in-depth interviews were conducted under the qualitative method, utilizing purposive sampling. The findings revealed that family conflicts were often triggered by the conduct of female in-laws, encompassing mothers-in-law, daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law. Jealousy, envy, and backbiting were identified as key reasons for conflicts involving female in-laws. Moreover, these conflicts were linked to factors such as illiteracy, lack of awareness, and inadequate socialization. To mitigate conflict-oriented behavior within families, the study recommends implementing measures such as quality education, effective family policies, and awareness programs focused on conflict management.*

Keywords: *Family Conflict, Female in-laws, Conflict management, Joint Families, Rural areas*

1. Introduction

Women role is regarded as vital in family affairs. Their role contribution could be recognized in recreation, economy of the family and rearing and caring of children. They play positive role in family integration, securing food and take proper care of those who are sick. Women's contribution to the socio-economic activities of the family could not be ignored (Mutangadura, 2010). Even in rural areas, women are actively involved in productive works to support their families by contributing to household economy (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020). While conflict causing sufferings to everyone, women are very prone to its short and long-term effects, in particular (USAID, 2007). Armed conflicts and forced migration have negative consequences on women living conditions and physical and psychological health along with

gender based violence (Collins *et al.*, 2011; Pavli & Maltezou, 2017; Jolof *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, domestic violence is one of the serious worldwide problems (Burnette & Cannon, 2014). Women face issues like wife abuse, intimate partner violence including physical, sexual and verbal acts that harm them (Durocher, 2005; Heman *et al.*, 2015). According to a study, one in three women around the world has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (World Health Organization, 2014). The research of western feminists has been concentrated largely on violence perpetrated by men against women (Radford and Russell, 1994), for example, studies in UK shows that in 92% cases the violence perpetrators were men and 91% of victims were women (Hester, 2009).

Similarly women are facing issues like wife abuse and domestic violence (Fikree *et al.*, 2005; Kalmuss, 1984) but in some cases, their own role and behavior result into various violent acts (Stets, 1992). Violence by women against women has created discomforts among feminists (Rew *et al.*, 2013). Although rare but some women are involved in violence in intimate relationships including same sex or heterosexual (Donovan *et al.*, 2006). Women behavior has been reported responsible for violence against children (Fitzroy, 2001) and in some cases against their male partner. Women are also involved in political violence and violent armed conflict including offering themselves for suicide attacks (Hamilton, 2007). The violent behavior of women have been reported from different parts of the world including India (Krishna *et al.*, 2012).

For example, the violence from mother in law threatens the physical and emotional wellbeing of daughter in laws from India to Mexico (Ali *et al.*, 2012; Krishnan *et al.*, 2012). The relationship between mothers in law and daughters in law has been perceived as a source of family conflicts weakening the bonds of marital life (Fingerman *et al.*, 2012; Fowler and Rittenour, 2017). The reasons of violence perpetrated by mothers in law include jealousy resulting from son's love for his wife and to weaken their relationship (Kandiyoti, 1988), teach them the rules of house and to ensure control over family affairs (Hegland, 2019) and their daughters in law as an expression of power (Kandiyoti, 1988).

The whole group or family status is influenced by the behavior of women, especially that of male relatives (LANDINFO, 2011). The low educational level of women, the unequal empowerment issues between men and women, women's least participations in political affairs, the existing misconception about religious thoughts and traditional norms give way to various conflicts (Lead Pakistan, 2011). In a large number of families, occasional violence is outburst either by husbands or wives, or both (Johnson, 1995). Marital disputes are frequent, and sometimes get very violent. Most of the times, these disputes are provoked because no one in the society intervenes and thus result into divorce (Tabbasum, 2012). Negative communication may lead to withdrawal, denial, dominance, negative effect and conflicts (Buller, 2008). Some researches show that the domestic violence in parental family of wives, turns them to be involved, later on, in violent acts in the families in which they get married (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). Similarly, physical violence could be seen among those couples that are unable to deal constructively with conflict-oriented issues (Markman & Kraft, 1989).

Women also stimulate another type of conflict known as co-wife conflict. Research reports indicate that one of the basic reasons for co-wife conflict is a desire to have control on husband's attention or sexuality (Jankowiak & Wilreker, 2005). Co-wife conflict could also be encouraged due to folk aphorism or proverbs such as "a pair of dogs always bite" or "pecking hens never agree" (Archer, 1964), or "a compound of Bangwa wife is like a handful of highly poisonous snakes". These animalistic images are used to characterize and promote the co-wife character around the entire world indirectly. The linguistic expressions suggest that co-wives lack kindness, consideration, and sympathy, and strongly suggest beastliness (Spencer, 1998). Cattell (2003) termed this evidence the "myth of co-wife hostility". "Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conflict often emerges from an expectation that each is criticizing or undermining the other and try to possess the authority within family" (Hil, 2008). Even if there is a very loving family, still it has various conflict oriented issues. The people within family are emotionally attached with each other; they have long-term relationship and finally they have their own rules to deal

with family matters and avoid interference. These characteristics, sometimes, can lead to long, tangled, and violent forms of conflict. Although family conflicts lead to many problems like divorce and domestic violence but family also plays its role in repressing the issues that may disorganize the family unit and detach the members (Malek, 2013).

2. Methodology

This study was conducted in the selected union councils of District Dir Upper, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under a mixed method research approach including both qualitative and quantitative data. Both data sets were collected, organized, and analyzed separately, and then integrated using Creswell's (2014) concurrent strategy with a side-by-side comparison. The quantitative data was collected from a sample of 354 women from 4750 population. The sample size was selected as per the analogy of Sakaran (2003). A simple random sampling technique was used for the collection of data. A structured questionnaire was used as a tool for the collection of data.

In addition, qualitative information was gathered through interview guide from 25 respondents by using a purposive sampling technique to further explain the indicators of the study in a best possible manner. The interviews were stopped after getting saturation in the data obtained.

Since the participants of the study were females, therefore, four educated females were hired as members of the data collection team and were properly trained. In order to measure the strength and direction of association between variables, Chi-square test s was applied using the formula of McHugh (2009)

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \dots \dots \dots \text{eq. (2)}$$

In next phase, the qualitative data was presented and analyzed independently using thematic analysis approach. The independent variable of the study of the study was used as the major theme of the study after developing categories and pattern. Finally, the results obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data were mixed or triangulated, through side-by-side comparison approach under the convergence model of Creswell “concurrent strategy”. The aim of triangulation was to interpret both data sets and to see whether the qualitative findings confirm or disconfirm the results obtained from qualitative data.

3. Results

3.1. Role of female in-laws

Under this heading, it was intended to know whether the role of female in-law could be the source of family conflicts or not. In the target area, family conflicts mostly occur because of the negative role of the female in-laws. The conflicts are either initiated because of the behavior of mother-in-law, daughter-in-law or sisters-in-law. In Table 3.1 it has been attempted to find out that whose behavior could contribute to family conflicts and to which extent. Various factors i.e. illiteracy, unawareness, poor socialization and communication gap affect the behavior of women within family which lead to family conflicts. These factors will be discussed one by one in the coming up pages of this chapter.

Majority of the respondents i.e. 76.8% told that behavior of in-laws could be the source of family conflicts as they strongly agreed the statement (The behavior of in-laws creates opportunities for familial conflicts to occur). These conflicts could be resulting from the behavior of sisters-in-law as 74.9% of the respondents strongly agreed the statement that sisters-in-law contribute more to conflicts within family. Mother-in-law behavior is also responsible for initiating family conflicts as 45.2% and 40.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively the statement that mother-in-law

mostly involve in creating conflicts. While asking the respondents whether they ignore the negative behavior of in-laws, 42.4% strongly agreed and 41.8% agreed the statement that they ignore the negative behavior of in-laws. The positive response to this statement is because the respondents were educated, thus, they avoid conflicts and ignore the negative behavior of their in-laws. However, 77.4% of the respondent told that they face conflicts resulting from the behavior of in-laws by strongly agreeing the statement concerned.

Similarly, 74.0% of the respondents strongly agreed the statement that the behavior of daughter-in-laws adds to conflict among other female in the family and 76.0% of the respondents were found as unhappy of their mothers in-law as the strongly agreed the statement (your mother-in-law behaviors adds to conflict occurring in your family). The purpose of this direct question was to assess the personal situation of respondents in their concerned families. In the target area, the married sisters of the husband also contribute to family conflicts as 79.4% strongly agreed the statement that sisters-in-laws (husbands' sisters) interfere in family affairs even after getting married.

Table- 3.1: Role of in-Laws and Family Conflict

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
The behaviour of in laws creates opportunities for familial conflicts to occur	16(4.5)	17(4.8)	19(5.4)	30(8.5)	272(76.8)	354
Sisters in- law contribute more to conflicts within family	17(4.8)	18(5.1)	16(4.5)	38(10.7)	265(74.9)	354
Mother in- law mostly involve in creating familial conflict	16(4.5)	20(5.6)	15 (4.2)	143(40.4)	160(45.2)	354
You ignore the negative behaviour of in laws	17(4.8)	22(6.2)	17(4.8)	148(41.8)	150(42.4)	354
You face conflicts resulting from the behaviour of your in- laws	23(6.5)	16(4.5)	20(5.6)	21(5.9)	274(77.4)	354
Daughter in law behaviour adds to conflicts among other female in the family	15(4.2)	14(4.0)	22(6.2)	41(11.6)	262(74.0)	354
Your mother in -law behaviour adds to familial conflicts occur within your family	14(4.0)	16(4.5)	31(8.8)	24(6.8)	269(76.0)	354
Sister in laws interfere in family affairs even after getting married	16(4.5)	15(4.2)	21(5.9)	21(5.9)	281(79.4)	354

3.2. Association between Role of In-Laws and Family Conflicts

The figures in table below, indicate that there is a highly significant ($p=0.000$) association between the behavior of in-laws and family conflicts. Family conflicts could also occur when female in-laws are not cooperative with each other because a highly significant ($p=0.000$) association was found between less cooperation of in-laws and conflicts resulting out of it. A highly significant ($p=0.000$) association was found between the role of sisters-in-law and family conflicts. Similarly, the behavior of mother-in-law was also found in highly significant ($p=0.000$) association with family conflicts. Again, when the respondents were asked whether they face conflicts result from the behavior of their in-laws, a highly significant association ($p=0.000$) was found between the behaviors of the in-laws of the respondents and family conflicts. Additionally, the behavior of daughters-in-law was also stands in highly significant($p=0.000$) association with family conflicts as show in Table-1. Similarly, a highly significant ($p=0.000$) association could also be seen between the behaviors of the mothers-in-laws of and family conflicts.

Table-3.2 Associations between In-Laws Role and Family Conflicts

S. No	Statement	Response	Family Confl					Total	Statistics
			S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree		
1	The behavior of in-laws create opportunities for family conflicts	S. Disagree	1(4.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(3.0%)	14(5.1%)	16(4.5%)	$\chi^2=80.987$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(9.1%)	14(5.1%)	17(4.8%)	
		Neutral	0(0.0%)	5(27.8%)	2(25.0%)	3(9.1%)	9(3.3%)	19(5.4%)	
		Agree	2(8.7%)	1(5.6%)	0(0.0%)	13(39.4%)	14(5.1%)	30(8.5%)	
		S. Agree	20(87.0%)	12(66.7%)	6(75.0%)	13(39.4%)	221(81.3%)	272(76.8%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
2	Your female In-Laws are not cooperative with you which lead you to fight with them.	S. Disagree	9(39.1%)	0(0.0%)	2(25.0%)	3(9.1%)	2(0.7%)	16(4.5%)	$\chi^2=185.869$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	1(4.3%)	1(5.6%)	0(0.0%)	7(21.2%)	9(3.3%)	18(5.1%)	
		Neutral	1(4.3%)	4(22.2%)	1(12.5%)	11(33.3%)	6(2.2%)	23(6.5%)	
		Agree	0(0.0%)	1(5.6%)	1(12%)	8(24.2%)	141(51.8%)	151(42.7%)	
		S. Agree	12(52.2%)	12(66.7%)	4(50.0%)	4(12.1%)	114(41.9%)	146(41.2%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
3	Sisters-in-law contribute more to conflicts within family	S. Disagree	1(4.3%)	1(5.6%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	15(5.5%)	17(4.8%)	$\chi^2=104.772$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(9.1%)	15(5.5%)	18(5.1%)	
		Neutral	0(0.0%)	4(22.2%)	2(25.0%)	2(6.1%)	8(2.9%)	16(4.5%)	
		Agree	1(4.3%)	1(5.6%)	1(12.5%)	18(54.5%)	17(6.3%)	38(10.7%)	
		S. Agree	21(91.3%)	12(66.5%)	5(62.5%)	10(30.3%)	217(79.8%)	265(74.9%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
4	Mother-in-Laws mostly involve in creating familial conflict	S. Disagree	1(4.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(15.2%)	10(3.7%)	16(4.5%)	$\chi^2=87.333$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	0(0.0%)	3(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	2(6.1%)	15(5.5%)	20(5.6%)	
		Neutral	1(4.3%)	3(16.7%)	2(25.0%)	6(18.2%)	3(1.1%)	15(4.2%)	
		Agree	0(0.0%)	1(5.6%)	1(12.5%)	11(33.3%)	130(47.8%)	143(40.4%)	
		S. Agree	21(91.3%)	11(61.1%)	5(62.5%)	9(27.3%)	114(41.9%)	160(45.2%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
5	You face conflicts resulting from the behavior of your in-laws	S. Disagree	1(4.3%)	3(16.7%)	1(12.5%)	1(3.0%)	17(6.3%)	23(6.5%)	$\chi^2=135.996$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(3.0%)	15(5.5%)	16(4.5%)	
		Neutral	0(0.0%)	4(22.2%)	2(25.0%)	9(27.3%)	5(1.8%)	20(5.6%)	
		Agree	2(8.7%)	0(0.0%)	2(25.0%)	12(36.4%)	5(1.8%)	21(5.9%)	
		S. Agree	20(87.0%)	11(61.1%)	3(37.5%)	10(30.3%)	230(84.6%)	274(77.4%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
6	Daughter-in-law behavior adds to conflicts among other female in the family	S. Disagree	6(26.1%)	3(16.7%)	4(50.0%)	2(13.3%)	0(0.0%)	15(4.2%)	$\chi^2=214.640$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	3(13.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	3(9.1%)	7(2.6%)	14(4.0%)	
		Neutral	0(0.0%)	4(22.2%)	1(12.5%)	0(0.0%)	17(77.3%)	22(6.2%)	
		Agree	2(8.7%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	21(63.6%)	17(6.3%)	41(11.6%)	
		S. Agree	12(52.2%)	11(61.1%)	1(12.5%)	7(21.2%)	231(84.9%)	262(74.0%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	
7	Your mother in law behavior adds to familial conflicts occur within family	S. Disagree	1(4.3%)	2(11.1%)	6(75.0%)	4(12.1%)	1(0.4%)	14(4.0%)	$\chi^2=299.964$ $p=0.000$
		Disagree	4(17.4%)	7(38.9%)	0(0.0%)	4(12.1%)	1(0.4%)	16(4.5%)	
		Neutral	0(0.0%)	6(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	8(24.2%)	17(6.3%)	31(8.8%)	
		Agree	2(8.7%)	3(16.7%)	1(12.5%)	11(33.3%)	7(2.6%)	24(6.8%)	
		S. Agree	16(69.6%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	6(18.2%)	246(90.4%)	269(76.0%)	
		Total	23(100%)	18(100%)	8(100%)	33(100%)	272(100%)	354(100%)	

3.3. Qualitative Analysis of Role of in-laws in Family conflicts

The respondents told that in joint families the behavior of in-laws create conflict-oriented situation. Most of the respondents told that the behavior of their mother-in-law is responsible for conflict occur in their family, as a respondent tells *“My mother-in-law was too strict and she used to fight with me on small issues every time, she often used to tell, that daughter-in-laws should be kept under pressure”*. Another respondent told, *“because of my mother-in-law’s behavior my husband and his brothers fought*

many times, even they picked up guns against each other". Some women told that their sisters-in-laws are not cooperative with them as narrated by a woman "I am the only daughter-in-law in my husband's home, my husband is in Saudi Arab and I suffer from the behavior of my in-laws, especially sisters of my husband. If I ever ask my sisters in laws to help me in the household activities, they get angry and their parents also take their side, sometime I get out of control and the fighting takes place and reaches to physical beating and violence".

Some of the respondents told that our sister- in- laws (wives of their husbands' brothers) feel jealousy with them, a women talked about her sister-in-law as, *"If someone loves my kids she cannot bear, if my parents or sisters come to our home and my in-laws respect them she cannot bear, when she gets jealous I could also get"*. The women stated that back biting, envy and greed are the sole reasons of tension among female-in-laws within joint families. Some of the respondents hold that often tensions and conflicts occur among women on children issues, *"In our family when children fight with each other, their mother fight more than them and the dispute may shift to male members of the family which results into verbal and physical aggression"*. Some of the respondents believed that the mother and sisters of their sister-in-laws misguide and convince their daughters which not only creates conflict within family but between the members of both the families. *"My sister-in-law is always misguided by her mother and sisters; whenever she visits her father home and then come back, she behaves quite differently"*. he respondents also stated that in joint families, the mother and sisters of their husband often expect the daughter-in-law to comply with their wishes. One respondent shared, *"The sisters of my husband tell me that I cannot visit my relatives or parents without their permission. This leads to conflicts because I do not consider myself bound to obey them."*

4. Discussion

The analysis of family dynamics through a blend of quantitative and qualitative data sets, interwoven with existing literature, provides a nuanced understanding of conflict within joint families. Quantitative findings indicate a highly significant association ($p=0.000$) between in-law behavior and family conflicts, highlighting the central role played by interpersonal dynamics among female family members. For instance, the lack of cooperation and negative behaviors of sisters-in-law and mothers-in-law emerge as strong predictors of conflict, supported by data showing a significant correlation across these variables. Such behaviors exacerbate tensions and create an atmosphere ripe for disputes.

Qualitative narratives enrich this understanding, offering vivid accounts of daily life struggles in joint family setups. Respondents describe their mother-in-law's strictness and controlling behaviors as a significant source of discord. Statements like, *"My mother-in-law was too strict and she used to fight with me on small issues every time"* reflect the emotional toll of these interactions. These experiences often lead to broader conflicts within the family, as exemplified by instances where disagreements between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law triggered altercations involving male family members. Similarly, sisters-in-law's uncooperative attitudes and jealousy, articulated through statements like, *"If someone loves my kids, she cannot bear it,"* further deepen these rifts, showing how envy and competitiveness can fracture familial relationships.

The literature corroborates these lived experiences, situating them within broader socio-cultural contexts. Kandiyoti (1988) and Hegland (2019) explore how mothers-in-law often assert authority to maintain control over family affairs, which can lead to power struggles with daughters-in-law. The behavior of in-laws, particularly the mothers-in-law, is not merely a domestic matter but reflects deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that valorize hierarchical power structures within families. Such dynamics resonate with findings from studies like those of Krishnan *et al.* (2012), which document similar patterns of conflict across diverse cultural contexts, from India to Mexico.

Moreover, the qualitative accounts expose how extended family dynamics, including the influence of external relatives, can ignite conflicts. For instance, sisters-in-law being misled by their maternal

families and acting antagonistically toward their cohabiting in-laws demonstrate the interconnectedness of internal and external family relationships. Respondents narrate how these tensions escalate into physical violence and verbal aggression, underscoring the volatility of these environments. The literature parallels these observations, with works like LANDINFO (2011) and Buller (2008) describing how negative communication and traditional family norms exacerbate domestic disputes, often resulting in physical violence or marital breakdown.

The role of women as both perpetrators and victims in these conflicts is a critical theme that emerges from both data and literature. While the behavior of in-laws, particularly mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, is often cited as a primary source of conflict, there is also acknowledgment of women's participation in perpetuating cycles of violence and jealousy. Literature from researchers such as Stets (1992) and Donovan *et al.* (2006) highlights instances where women engage in violent behaviors against other women, challenging traditional feminist narratives that exclusively frame women as victims. This dual role complicates efforts to address family conflict, as interventions must navigate the fine line between addressing patriarchal oppression and recognizing women's agency in perpetuating certain conflicts.

Quantitative findings also illuminate how family conflicts are not isolated events but are linked to broader socio-economic and cultural factors. For example, the role of jealousy, as supported by narratives, aligns with the findings of Jankowiak & Wilreker (2005), who discuss how competition for resources or attention within polygamous setups drives hostility. Additionally, traditional proverbs and folk aphorisms, such as "*a pair of dogs always bite*" or "*pecking hens never agree*," perpetuate negative stereotypes about co-wives and sisters-in-law, as highlighted by Archer (1964) and Spencer (1998). These cultural narratives reinforce antagonistic behaviors, embedding them within the fabric of familial interactions.

Family conflicts also have profound implications for the emotional and physical well-being of women. As USAID (2007) and Collins *et al.* (2011) note, conflicts within families disproportionately affect women, leading to long-term psychological and health issues. The accounts of verbal and physical aggression among respondents vividly illustrate this, linking everyday domestic tensions to broader patterns of gender-based violence. Furthermore, the unequal distribution of power and educational opportunities, as discussed in works by Lead Pakistan (2011) and Fikree *et al.* (2005), exacerbates women's vulnerability to conflict, limiting their ability to address or escape harmful situations.

Despite these challenges, the family unit's role as both a source of conflict and a mechanism for resolution emerges as a recurring theme. While family structures often contribute to disputes, they also serve as critical sites for reconciliation and support. Literature by Malek (2013) underscores the family's capacity to repress and resolve conflicts to preserve its cohesion. This dual role reflects the complex, multifaceted nature of familial relationships, where love, loyalty, and conflict coexist, shaping the lived experiences of its members.

5. Conclusion

The findings emphasize the significant impact of in-laws' behavior on family conflicts, particularly in joint family systems. Negative attitudes, especially from mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, were identified as key triggers, often leading to jealousy, manipulation, and unequal sharing of household responsibilities. These conflicts are deeply rooted in patriarchal norms and rigid family structures that restrict women's autonomy and create power struggles. The resulting tensions take a heavy emotional and physical toll, often escalating into verbal and physical aggression, which affects family relationships and individual well-being. Traditional gender roles further intensify these conflicts by reinforcing male dominance and limiting women's agency. A major issue highlighted is the lack of effective mechanisms for resolving family disputes, leading to unresolved conflicts, long-standing resentments, and, in some cases, divorce. Addressing these challenges requires introducing structured

conflict resolution strategies, such as involving neutral family elders and promoting open communication. Empowering women through fair distribution of responsibilities, increasing their autonomy, and challenging patriarchal norms can help reduce conflicts and strengthen family harmony. Additionally, raising awareness about the impact of unresolved disputes and implementing gender-sensitive interventions is essential for fostering healthier and more cooperative family dynamics.

References

- Ali, T. S., Krantz, G., & Mogren, I. (2012). Violence permeating daily life: a qualitative study investigating perspectives on violence among women in Karachi, Pakistan. *International journal of women's health*, 577-585.
- Archer, W.G. (1964). *Tribal law and justice: A report on the Santal*. New Haven.
- Apter, T. (2009). *What do you want from me?: Learning to get along with In- Laws*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Buller, J. E. (2008). *The impact of family of origin conflict management style on participation in a violent intimate relationship*. Unpublished master's thesis for master's degree, Oklahoma State University- Oklahoma USA. Retrieved November 20, 2013 from http://digital.library.okstate.edu/etd/buller_okstate_0664m_10108.pdf
- Burnette, C. E., & Cannon, C. (2014). "It will always continue unless we can change something": Consequences of intimate partner violence for indigenous women, children, and families. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 5(1), 24585. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.24585>
- Catell, M. G. (2003). Abaluyia. *Encyclopedia of sex and gender*, eds. M. Ember and C. Ember, pp. 247-56. New York: Springer Publishers.
- Choi, A. W. M., Chan, E. K. L., & Brownridge, D. A. (2010). Unraveling the In-law conflict and its association with intimate partner violence in Chinese culture: narrative accounts of Chinese battered women. In *Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development*. University of Toronto* Department of Sociology.
- Collins, C. H., Zimmerman, C., & Howard, L. M. (2011). Refugee, asylum seeker, immigrant women and postnatal depression: rates and risk factors. *Archives of women's mental health*, 14, 3-11.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (4th eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dildar, S., Sitwat, A., & Yasin, S. (2013). Intimate enemies: Marital conflict and conflict resolution styles in dissatisfied married couples. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 15(10), 1433-1439
- Donovan, C., Hester, M., Holmes, J., & McCarry, M. (2006). Comparing domestic abuse in same sex and heterosexual relationships. *United Kingdom: University of Sunderland and University of Bristol*.
- Fikree, F.F, Razzak, J.A., & Dourcher, J. (2005). Attitude of Pakistani men to domestic violence: a study from Karachi, Pakistan. *Journal of Men's Health and Gender*, 2(1), 49-58
- Fingerman, K. L., Gilligan, M., VanderDridt, L., & Pitzer, L. (2012). In-law relationships before and after marriage: Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and their mother-in-law. *Research in Human Development*, 9(2), 106–125. doi:10.1080/15427609.2012.680843
- Fitzroy, L. (2001). Violent women: questions for feminist theory, practice and policy. *Critical Social Policy*, 21(1), 7-34.
- Fowler, C., & Rittenour, C. (2017). A life-span approach to children-in-law's perceptions of parent-in-

- law communication. *Journal of Family Communication*, 17(3), 254–272.
Doi:10.1080/15267431.2017.1281280
- Hamilton, C. (2007). Political violence and body language in life stories of women ETA activists. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 32(4), 911-932.
- Hegland, M. E. (2019). Wife abuse and the political system: A Middle Eastern case study. In *Sanctions And Sanctuary* (pp. 203-218). Routledge.
- Hester, M. (2009). *Who does what to whom?: Gender and domestic violence perpetrators*. Bristol: University of Bristol [in association with] Northern Rock Foundation.
- Heyman, R. E., Slep, A. S., & Foran, H. M. (2015). Enhanced definitions of intimate partner violence for DSM-5 and ICD-11 may promote improved screening and treatment. *Family Process*, 54(1), 64–81. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12121>
- Hil, A. (2008). *In-Law tensions hit women hardest*. Retrieved July 5, 2023, from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/nov/30/women-family>
- Jabeen, S., Haq, S., Jameel, A., Hussain, A., Asif, M., Hwang, J., & Jabeen, A. (2020). Impacts of rural women's traditional economic activities on household economy: Changing economic contributions through empowered women in rural Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 12(7), 2731.
- Jankowiak, W., Sudakov, M., & Wilreker, B.C. (2005). Co-wife conflict and cooperation. *Ethnology*, 44(1), 81-98
- Hegland, M. E. (2019). Wife abuse and the political system: A Middle Eastern case study. In *Sanctions And Sanctuary* (pp. 203-218). Routledge.
- Hotaling, G. T., & Sugarman, D.B. (1986). An analysis of risk markers in husband to wife violence: the state of knowledge. *Violence and Victims*, 1(2), 101-124
- Johnson, M.P. (1995). Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57(2), 283-294
- Jolof, L., Rocca, P., Mazaheri, M., Okenwa Emegwa, L., & Carlsson, T. (2022). Experiences of armed conflicts and forced migration among women from countries in the Middle East, Balkans, and Africa: a systematic review of qualitative studies. *Conflict and Health*, 16(1), 46.
- Kalmuss, D. (1984). The intergenerational transmission of marital aggression: *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46(1), 11-19
- Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & society*, 2(3), 274-290.
- Khalid, S. (2012). *Why women fight other women*. Retrieve October 9, 2023 from <http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/10750/why-women-fight-other-women/>
- Krishnan, S., Subbiah, K., Chandra, P., & Srinivasan, K. (2012). Minimizing risks and monitoring safety of an antenatal care intervention to mitigate domestic violence among young Indian women: The Dil Mil trial. *BMC Public Health*, 12, 1-13.
- LANDINFO. (2011). *Afghanistan: Blood feuds, traditional law (Pashtunwali) and traditional conflict resolution*. Report, Retrieved June 20, 2023 <http://www.landinfo.no/asset/1940>
- Lead Pakistan. (2011). *Domestic violence*. Retrieved April 20, 2023 from <http://www.lead.org.pk/hr/attachment/issues/Domestic%20violence.pdf>
- Malek, C. (2013). *Family conflict*. Retrieved July 7, 2024 from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/coreknowledge/family-conflict>
- Markman & Kraft. (1989). Men and women in marriage: Dealing with gender differences in marital

- therapy. *Behavior Therapist*, 12(1), 51-56
- Mutangadura, G. (2010). Achieving gender equality, womens empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa: A review of the role of family policy and social protection. Draft Paper Accessed September10, 1-14.
- Pavli, A., & Maltezou, H. (2017). Health problems of newly arrived migrants and refugees in Europe. *Journal of travel medicine*, 24(4), tax016.
- Radford, J., & Russell, D. (Eds.). (1994). Femicide: The politics of woman killing. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 27(2), 210-211.
- Rew, M., Gangoli, G., & Gill, A. K. (2013). Violence between female in-laws in India. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 14(1), 147-160.
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Spencer, P. (1998). *The Pastoral Continuum: The Marginalization of Tradition in East Africa*. USA: Oxford University Press.
- Stets, J. E. (1992). Interactive processes in dating aggression: A national study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54(1), 165-177
- Tabbasum, S. (2012). *Marital Disputes: Experiences of women in Pakistan*. Published on LAPLAMBERT Academic Publishing (April 20, 2012). Retrieved June 20, 2024, from <http://www.amazon.com/Marital-Disputes-Experiences-women-Pakistan/dp/3846528439>
- USAID. (2007). *Women and conflict: An introductory guide to the program*, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Bureau for Democracy, (USAID). Retrieved June 20, 2024, from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadj133.pdf
- World Health Organization. (2014). The Global Status Report on Violence Prevention. Retrieved November 15, 2023 from www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/en/