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UNVEILING THE VEIL: UNEARTHING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TEHSIL DAGGER DISTRICT BUNER

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ABSTRACT

The research endeavor delves into the examination of structural violence perpetrated against women within Buner, with a specific focus on the Tehsil Dagger. Its overarching aim is to dissect the nuanced manifestations, root causes, and consequential ramifications of such systemic oppression upon the female populace in the region. The study concentrates predominantly on scrutinizing five key variables: the systematic deprivation of women's educational access, the arbitrary negation of their entitlement to inherit property, the prevalence of coerced and underage marriages, the limited employment prospects for women, and their restricted involvement in political spheres within the locality. This scholarly pursuit holds considerable significance for stakeholders, policymakers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental bodies alike, as it endeavors to illuminate the prevailing issue of violence targeting women. Methodologically, a blend of quantitative analysis and a case study approach has been adopted. Data collection involved a sample size comprising 382 respondents, drawn from all 17 Village Councils within the Tehsil. Ultimately, the researchers proffer recommendations and suggestions aimed at mitigating the identified challenges.

Keywords: Structural Violence, Gender, Discrimination, inheritance.

INTRODUCTION

Structural violence against women remains a significant global challenge, particularly in countries like Pakistan, characterized by male dominance and a patriarchal social structure where violence against women is often overlooked. The United Nations issued a declaration in 1993 to address the eradication of violence against women, highlighting that such violence is a reflection of historical unequal power dynamics between men and women, resulting in male domination, discrimination against women, and hindrance to women's full advancement. This declaration emphasizes that violence against women serves as a crucial social mechanism to enforce women's subordinate status compared to men. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence against women as a spectrum of coercive acts encompassing sexual, psychological, and physical abuse inflicted upon women.

Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung introduced the term "structural violence" in his paper "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" (Lewis, 2019). Galtung defines this term as "the negative power of social organization and social institutions against some marginalized communities." He distinguishes between different types of violence, noting that scholars before the 1960s primarily addressed direct violence (Christie, 2008). Galtung further elaborates on the difference between direct and structural violence, highlighting that structural violence stems from societal structures such as social, political, and economic systems that limit the full utilization of human capabilities. Unlike individual-driven violence, structural violence is deeply entrenched within society's organizational framework (Galtung, 1969). Galtung also asserts that structural violence results in unequal distribution of resources and power, including access to healthcare, education, social status, job opportunities, as well as political and legal rights (Galtung, 1969). He argues that social inequality and injustice contribute to the formation of structural violence, which is often characterized by its invisibility, as the harm inflicted is systemic and affects masses rather than individuals directly (Galtung, 1969). Galtung suggests that

structural violence can be sustained through various means, such as misinformation, the threat of direct violence, repression, manipulation, and brainstorming (Galtung, 1969).

Women are integral members of every society, constituting approximately half of the population worldwide. They play crucial roles in fostering the development, prosperity, and advancement of their countries. Regrettably, in Pashtun society, women do not receive the recognition and value they rightfully deserve, unlike in other societies. This disparity stems from the patriarchal and social structures ingrained in Pashtun culture, where women are often subjected to male dominance. The traditional values and customs of Pashtun society legitimize the subjugation of women and the dominance of men. As a result, women in Pashtun society face the consequences of this structure, which often manifest as violence against them. For instance, many women in Pashtun society are deprived of their right to education, which is constitutionally, legally, and morally guaranteed to them. Women's education is perceived as contradictory to the existing norms and values of Pashtun culture. Similarly, women are often denied their rightful inheritance in property, despite it being protected by civil and Islamic law. Instead of acknowledging and practicing women's inheritance rights, many in the community refuse to recognize them.

Significantly, the research study aims to mitigate violence by fostering awareness among the masses. For instance, women in the region will recognize their rights, often infringed upon by the existing social structure. Education empowers women to contribute significantly to societal progress. Access to inheritance and employment opportunities enhances their financial stability. Preventing forced and child marriages contributes to their happiness. Women's political participation is crucial for safeguarding their rights. Given the multidimensional nature of structural violence, this study contributes valuable insights to fields such as political science, sociology, and gender studies. It offers firsthand knowledge to the populace and can guide policymakers, executives, and legislators in formulating and enforcing laws addressing violence against women. Additionally, NGOs and IGOs working on women's issues in Pakistan stand to benefit from the study's findings.

Pakistan ranks poorly in terms of gender equality, holding the 148th position out of 149 countries. District Buner and Tehsil Dagger reflect this trend, with women facing discrimination in various aspects of life. They are discouraged from pursuing education, denied their rightful share of property, and have limited political participation. Forced marriages are prevalent, and employment opportunities for women are scarce in these areas. Through the lens of Johan Galtung's structural violence theory, this study aims to uncover the stark gender inequality and disparity present in these regions.

Theoretical framework

The literature review highlights various structural and cultural elements contributing to violence against women. These include the patriarchal nature of society, poverty, limited awareness and education, social Jirgas, sexism, power imbalances between genders, familial pressure regarding legal rights, among others. These factors align with two key theories of violence: structural violence theory and cultural violence theory. In the context of Tehsil Dagger, District Buner, these theories are pertinent in explaining and understanding the prevalence of structural and cultural violence against women, as elaborated below.

Structural violence theory

The term was first coined by Norwegian sociologist Johan Gultang in 1969, when he introduced this theory in his article titled "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." Johan Gultang's concept of structural violence delineates a form of societal harm wherein social, political, economic, and legal structures obstruct individuals from fulfilling their fundamental needs, such as access to resources and opportunities. This type of violence, as posited by Gultang, operates subtly within society, making it challenging to identify and address. Structural violence manifests in various forms, notably poverty, sexism, and racism, all stemming from systemic inequalities ingrained in social structures. Gultang's theory underscores that power imbalances and unequal resource distribution drive structural violence, typically perpetuated by the dominant societal groups benefiting from the status quo. Consequently, marginalized populations face systematic barriers to accessing essential resources, including education, healthcare, and political and economic opportunities.

Structural violence is prevalent in Tehsil Dagger, District Buner, particularly targeting

women. Various societal structures inhibit women in the area from fully realizing their capabilities. For example, entrenched patriarchy restricts women's access to basic needs such as education, employment, political participation, and choice in marriage. Poverty further exacerbates this situation, acting as a significant barrier to women's education due to their economic dependence on men. Consequently, decision-making power primarily rests with men, leading to instances of forced and child marriages. Sexism perpetuates discrimination against women based on their gender and biological identity, relegating them to roles solely within the household. The Jirga system, composed of influential male figures in the community, further marginalizes women by dictating their fate. Cultural norms like parental and fraternal control also limit women's autonomy, affecting their right to choose marriages, inherit property, and access employment opportunities. Additionally, a lack of awareness and societal threats contribute to the low political and economic participation of women. Legal structures also discriminate against Pashtun women, particularly in matters of inheritance, property ownership, and divorce, with inherited property often being registered solely in the names of male family members.

Cultural aspect of structural violence theory

Johan Gultang's cultural violence theory delineates any cultural elements utilized to justify and legalize direct or structural violence. While Gultang acknowledges that an entire culture may not be violent, certain aspects often serve to legitimize violence. These include divisions within culture such as art, religion, language, and sciences. Symbolic violence, employing cultural symbols, languages, and practices to validate violence, is also recognized. Applying this theory, numerous aspects of Pashtun culture inculcate and justify violence against women in the region. One such aspect is honor killing, where women are murdered by male relatives to uphold family honor, often in response to perceived breaches of cultural norms such as marrying against family wishes or engaging in premarital relationships. This underscores the limited agency women have in choosing their partners, as marriages are typically arranged by their parents or families. Another cultural norm, purdah (seclusion), severely restricts women's mobility, confining them to the home and denying them access to education, employment, and political participation. Symbolic violence is also evident, as the glorification of Pashtun honor and male dominance legitimizes violence against women. Practices like swara or vani further perpetuate violence, wherein sisters or daughters are given in compensation to resolve disputes, reinforcing the notion of women as property to be exchanged. Gender disparity is deeply ingrained, with preference given to male children from birth, leading to tension and depression within families upon the birth of a girl. Women are also systematically deprived of inheritance rights and land ownership, often due to familial pressures and cultural norms. Domestic violence remains prevalent, with women enduring physical, emotional, and psychological abuse within their own families, often concealed due to societal stigma and the fear of bringing shame to the family.

Design and methods

The study discussed violence against women in District Buner, specifically in Tehsil Dagger. It employed a quantitative research method aligned with the positivist approach and was inductive in nature. Moreover, the target population comprised women from various village councils, spanning different ages, social backgrounds, educational levels, and educational backgrounds.

The study was conducted in the 17 village councils of Tehsil Dagger. The primary focus areas included rights to inheritance, education, forced marriages, employment opportunities for women, and women's political participation within Tehsil Dagger.

As per Krejci and Morgan, a total of 382 respondents were selected for this study from the population of all 17 village councils in Tehsil Dagger. The respondents were aged 18 and above, ensuring they were familiar with the cultural values, norms, and understood the impact of structural violence on victims.

For the study, the researcher employed random sampling. Respondents were selected from various categories, including undergraduate and graduate students from Government Girls College Hasham SAR and the University of Buner, hailing from different village councils of Tehsil Dagger. Additionally, primary and middle school teachers, as well as illiterate women, were included as categories of respondents. To ensure equal representation from each village council, respondents were chosen based on parity, with 22 respondents selected from each

council, except for Dagger 1, Dagger 2, Torwarsak 1, and Torwarsak 2, where 24 respondents were selected due to their larger population. Among these respondents, girl's primary school teachers, girl's middle school teachers, undergraduates, illiterate individuals, and graduated women were selected to gather data.

Data was collected through questionnaires, including both close-ended and structured questions, from women of various ages and backgrounds in the area. Additionally, the researcher gathered data through direct and indirect observation, as they resided in a village council within the study universe. They directly and indirectly witnessed cases of structural violence against women in the area, providing insights into the local situation. The data collected through questionnaires was presented in the main section in the form of pie charts created using computer software like Excel. Furthermore, observations were described in different sections of the study, as per their relevance and importance.

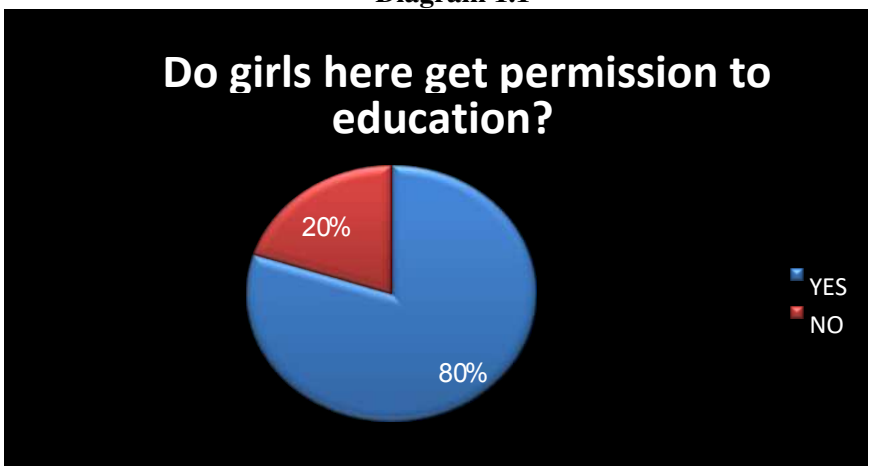
Findings and discussions

Diverse perspectives gleaned from our collected data shed light on varying viewpoints concerning the issues under study. In this section, we delve into whether structural violence permeates Tehsil Dagger, Buner, through an analysis of the majority views.

Education

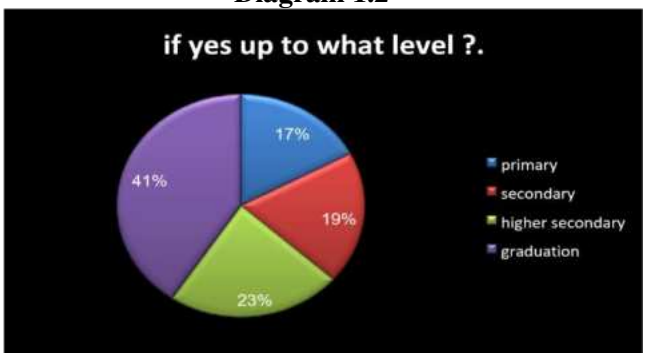
Girls' education holds paramount importance and is a pressing need worldwide at present. educated girls contribute significantly to every aspect of societal advancement, potentially bringing prosperity to their families and nations alike. There is virtually no limit to what educated girls can achieve. Educating a girl is akin to educating an entire family. Women's education has the potential to eradicate sexual abuse, discriminatory behavior, and disparities within various segments of society. the diagram 1.1 show permission to local girls for education.

Diagram 1.1



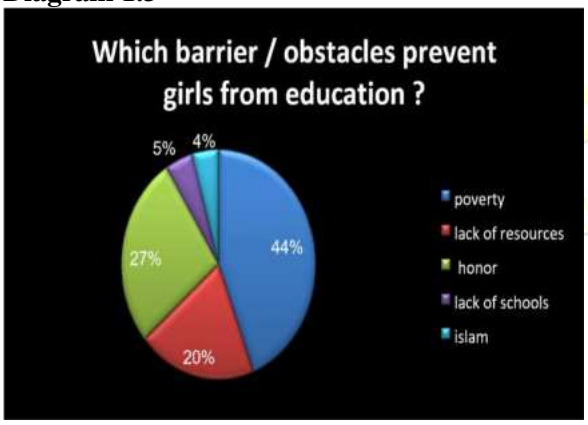
When respondents were questioned about it, 80% of them indicated that they received permission to pursue education, while 20% stated that they did not receive such permission. However, the granted permissions varied across different levels of education, as shown in the diagram 1.2 below

Diagram 1.2



In the survey respondents were questioned about the level of education they were permitted to pursue. the findings revealed that a notable portion of respondents,17 % were only granted up to the primary level ,19 % reported permission limited to the secondary level, while 23 %were allowed to proceed up to higher secondary level. A significant portion comprising 21 % of respondents, disclosed permission for education up to the graduation level. however a striking revelation emerged from the data analysis : approximately 59% 0f the surveyed girls didn't pursue authorization to pursue education beyond the higher secondary level .this disparity highlights the a concerning trend where the majority of girls are denied access to education beyond a certain point , potentially limiting their academic and professional advancement .Along with this several factors hinder women's education in this area as shown in the diagram1.3 below.

Diagram 1.3



Poverty serves as one of the strongest barriers to women's education acquisition. A large portion of the population in this Tehsil comes from impoverished backgrounds. Many struggle to afford even the most basic necessities of daily life, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Some families prioritize educating one or two boys while leaving the rest, including girls, without access to education due to poverty. This is why 44% of respondents mentioned poverty as a hindrance to education.

The second reason Is the lack of resources, which prevents women from accessing education in this Tehsil. The number of girls' schools is fewer compared to boys. Some families live in remote mountainous areas, making it difficult for them to access education in plain areas due to the lack of proximity to schools and colleges. Some villages are located 25 to 30 kilometers away from colleges, with only one government Girls College in the Tehsil and no available hostel. This is why 20% of respondents cited lack of resources as a barrier to education.

"Honor / Namous" constitutes the third reason why girls in this Tehsil face barriers to education. Honor / Namous holds a fundamental place in Pashtun culture and code. It implies that women are honorable when confined within the boundaries of the home (izzat Dara korany da – honorable family in Pashto). Families who educate their girls are often considered less honorable and liberal (be izzata korany – non-honorable family in Pashto). Males from such families face blame and taunts from other males in society, such as "ta deer biagairat ye Che haza Bahar owzi" (you are very disgraceful that your women go out of home). Women who pursue education are often labeled as characterless and are undesirable for marriage later on. Hence, 27% of respondents mentioned cultural values as a hindrance to girls' education.

The lack of schools is another reason preventing girls from accessing education in the area. Five percent of respondents reported that the scarcity of schools hinders their access to education, while 4% consider education to be un-Islamic.

Social discrimination against females is yet another reason why they are not permitted to pursue education. Discrimination starts from birth, with boys being celebrated with parties and gifts while girls are often not treated equally. Moreover, conservative-minded individuals in the area oppose women's education, believing that women belong solely within the home. These cultural and social barriers make it challenging for women in this Tehsil to access education. Despite obtaining permission to pursue education to some extent, many women discontinue their education before reaching higher secondary levels. According to respondents, 68% of them do not pursue education beyond the higher secondary level.

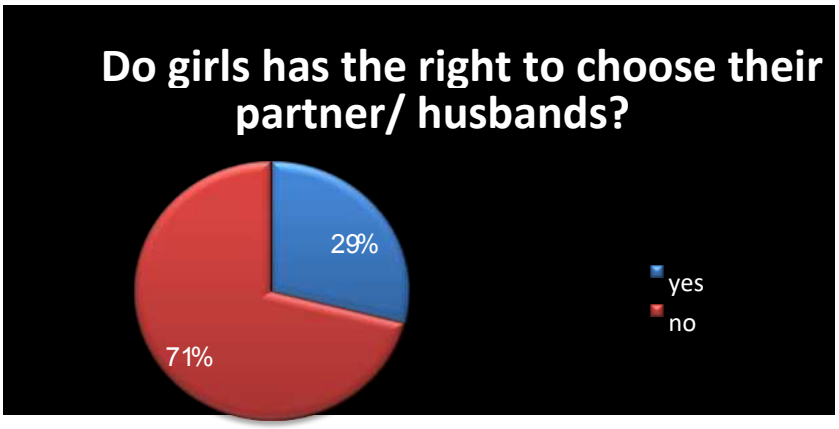
Marriage

Forced marriage is a global phenomenon, and it also exists in Pakistan, where at least one party is deprived of expressing full and free consent to marriage. Mostly, women are coerced into marriage against their will, perpetuating a traditional phenomenon often justified in the name of religion, especially in the majority of Muslim countries. However, forced marriage has nothing to do with religion. There is a clear distinction between forced

marriage and arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, both parties willingly express their consent and have no objections to the union. Conversely, in forced marriages, individuals are often deprived of the freedom to express their will and are typically unhappy with the arrangement (Riaz, 2012, p. 1).

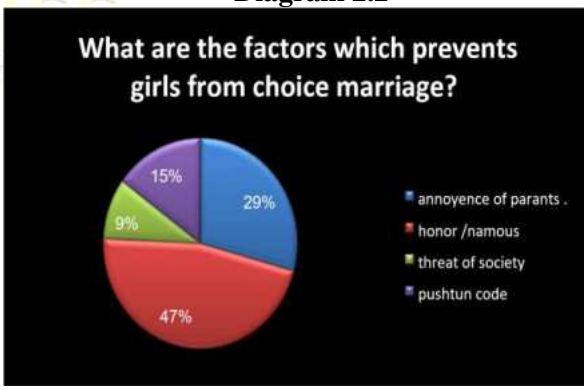
Islam grants women complete freedom to accept or reject marriage proposals from anyone. Moreover, no one, including parents and legal guardians, can compel a woman to marry against her will. Despite this, forced marriages persist in this area. The following statistics illustrate the prevalence of forced marriages in the region as shown in the diagram 2.1 below.

Diagram 2.1



When asked whether girls have the right to choose their partners, 71% of respondents answered "no," indicating that these women do not enjoy the freedom to choose their partners and are married according to their families' wishes. Only 21% of respondents reported having the right to choose their partners in the area. Additionally, when asked if their opinion was sought before marriage, 54% of respondents reported that their opinions were not considered. This indicates that not only are girls unable to express their will in choosing a partner, but their opinions are also disregarded before marriage. Furthermore, when asked if their parents forced them into marriage, 46% of respondents confirmed that they were coerced by their parents. These three questions highlight the prevalence of forced marriages in the area. To explore the reasons why women do not have the opportunity for choice marriages, it is shown in the diagram 2.2 below.

Diagram 2.2



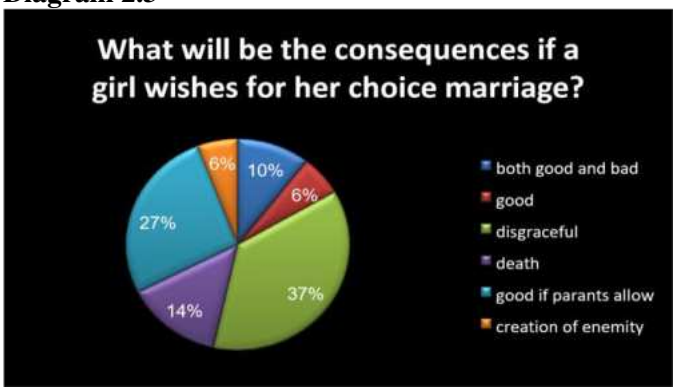
The primary reason women in this area do not marry according to their choice is the fear of upsetting their parents. Many women believe that expressing their will in choosing their partners will anger their parents. In reality, parents often become displeased if their daughters desire a choice marriage. If a girl does marry of her own choice, her parents may sever ties with her forever. They may neglect to inquire about her well-being or offer support if she experiences abuse at the hands of her husband. Instead, they blame their daughters for their decision. As a result, 29% of women do not pursue choice marriages, as reported in the study.

Another reason woman in this area do not have the opportunity for choice marriages is the concept of honor (Namous/Giarat). According to 47% of respondents, women here are denied choice marriages due to considerations of honor. If a woman does marry of her choice, she is labeled as dishonorable and characterless (be izzats, be Giarata). This stigma extends to her family members, who face similar taunts and judgment. Conversely, when a girl marries according to her family's wishes, she is considered the epitome of honor and obedience in the family.

The centuries-old Pashtun culture does not permit choice marriages for women in this area. 15% percent of respondents attribute the lack of choice marriages to the Pashtun code or law (pushtun wali). Pashtun people prioritize gold, women, and land (zar, zan, zameen) and are willing to sacrifice themselves for these values. They view it as a disgrace if a family member desires a choice marriage, leading to significant social repercussions.

Nine percent of respondents cite societal pressure as a deterrent to choose marriages for women in this area. After marriage, women who marry of their choice face blame and criticism from society, as well as their families. These women and their families are ostracized and subjected to ridicule. Additionally, the study explores various consequences of choice marriages for women in the area as shown in the diagram 2.3 below.

Diagram 2.3

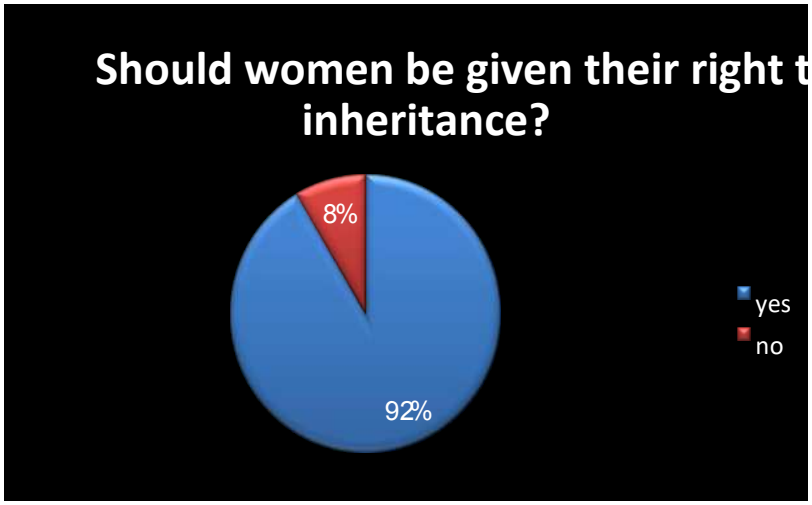


10 % percent of respondents believe that the outcomes of choice marriages can be both positive and negative, indicating uncertainty about the consequences. Six percent believe that choice marriages would benefit them, while 37% perceive choice marriages as disgraceful. Additionally, 14% of respondents fear for their lives if they pursue choice marriages, as they may face violence or even death. Twenty-seven percent of respondents believe that choice marriages would benefit them if their parents allowed it. However, parental permission is often the limiting factor, as choice marriages are contingent on parental approval. Only 6% of respondents express concerns about choice marriages leading to enmity between families and tribes.

Inheritance

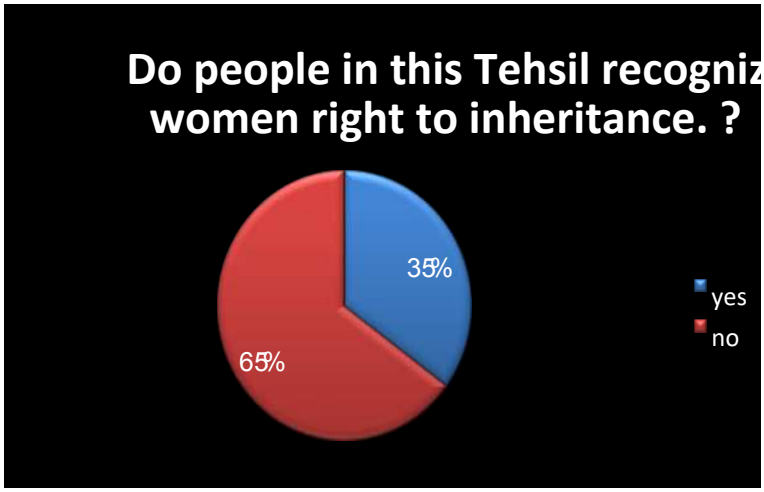
Inheritance stands as a pivotal mechanism governing the transfer of financial assets and property. When women possess ownership and control over inherited property, it can catalyze social, political, economic, and psychological prosperity for them. However, in District Buner, women are largely denied their rightful inheritance in property. Some women are compelled to relinquish their rightful share through coercion or force. The data collected from the survey highlights a resounding sentiment among women in the area regarding their desire to assert their right to inherit property as shown in the diagram 3.1 below.

Diagram 3.1



When posed with the question of whether they should be granted their inheritance rights, an overwhelming majority, accounting for 92% of the respondents, unequivocally answered in the affirmative. This robust affirmation underscores the awareness among women regarding their entitlement to inheritance. However, despite this pronounced awareness and the evident willingness to claim their inheritance rights, various factors hinder their ability to do so effectively. These constraints may encompass social, economic, and legal barriers that impede women from fully exercising their rights. As a result, although women express a strong desire for inheritance rights, their capacity to assert these rights may be limited by systemic challenges and societal norms that undermine their autonomy and agency in matters of property ownership. Moreover, the recognition of women right to share in property is show in the diagram 3.2 below.

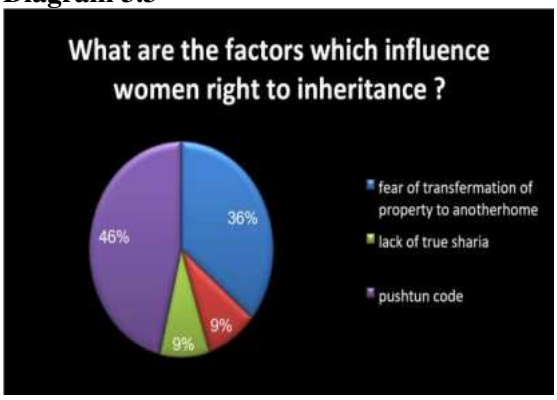
Diagram 3.2



The prevailing sentiment in this community is one of reluctance to acknowledge women's right to inheritance as a legitimate entitlement. A significant portion of respondents, comprising 65%, indicated that the local population does not recognize women's inheritance rights as such. This poses a fundamental challenge to the prospect of women actually being able to exercise their right to inherit property in practice. If the community fails to acknowledge these rights as valid and legitimate, it becomes

increasingly difficult to envision the realization of women's inheritance rights in tangible terms. The influencing factors for women inheritance right is given in the diagram 3.3 below.

Diagram 3.3



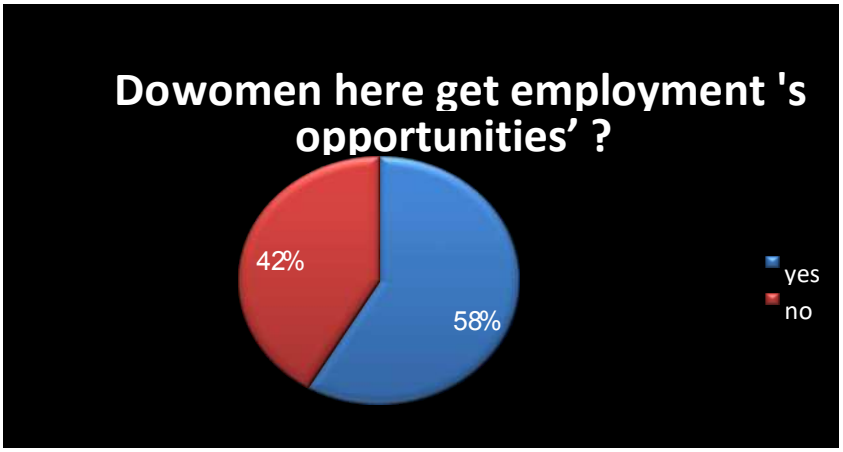
A total of 36% of the participants believed that the fear of property being transferred to another household affects women's inheritance rights. This indicates that parents fear their property going to their daughters-in-law's homes. The data analysis reveals that parents do not acknowledge their daughters' right to inherit. Another influential factor is Pashtun culture. 46% of the respondents mentioned the longstanding tradition in the region where women are not granted their rightful share in property. Furthermore, the absence of laws also plays a role in influencing women's inheritance rights. Women lack confidence to assert their rights in courts, and there is a weak enforcement mechanism for laws pertaining to women's inheritance rights. Consequently, 9% of the participants identified this as a factor affecting women's inheritance rights. In addition to this the absence of true Sharia law is also cited as a reason influencing women's right to their due share in property. 9% of the respondents believed that under a true Sharia system, their inheritance rights would be better protected than in the current system.

Parents' disapproval is the primary reason why women refrain from demanding their inheritance rights. A total of 53% of the respondents expressed concerns that asserting their rights would upset their fathers. Women in the area expressed sentiments such as "za da jaidad pa Sr Rona aw plar na pregdam. aw halta hpal izzat na hatmom," meaning they cannot leave their parents and brothers because of property and risk losing their honor in their parents' home. Some women also stated "pa hesa more aw plar prade kige," indicating that demanding their share might strain their relationship with their parents. They insisted they would not demand their rightful share unless it was willingly given by their parents and brothers.

Employment

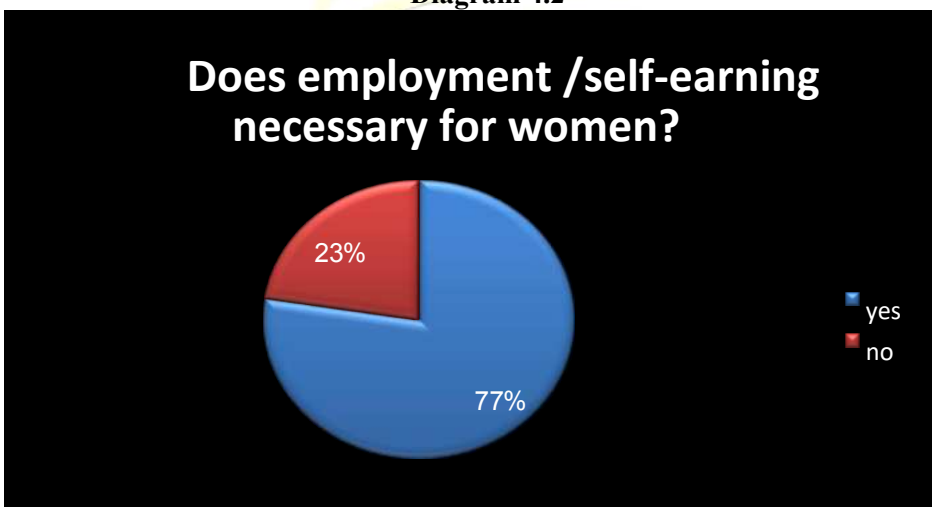
With women comprising half of the population, their significant impact on a country's development cannot be overlooked. In Pakistan, particularly in our Pashtun society, women's participation in employment and self-earning is significantly low. However, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women hold immense importance. By engaging in employment, women can achieve self-reliance, thereby reducing the likelihood of violence against them. It's commonly observed that violence against women often stems from their lack of economic independence, leading them to rely on their husbands or male family members. This perpetuates patriarchy and male dominance. Encouraging women's employment can effectively address these abusive behaviors and decrease violence against them. In the area, the level of women's employment is quite low as shown in the diagram 4.1 below.

Diagram 4.1



A staggering 58% of respondents indicated that they do not have any opportunities for employment whatsoever. Additionally, the remaining 38% are only permitted to work under specific conditions, typically requiring approval from their husbands and other male family members. This indicates a prevailing societal attitude where women's employment is viewed negatively, often conflicting with Pashtun cultural norms and interpretations of Islamic laws and Sharia. In general, there is a strong aversion to women participating in the workforce within this community. Moreover, the keen interest of the in-pursuing employment is shown in the diagram 4.2 below**.**

Diagram 4.2



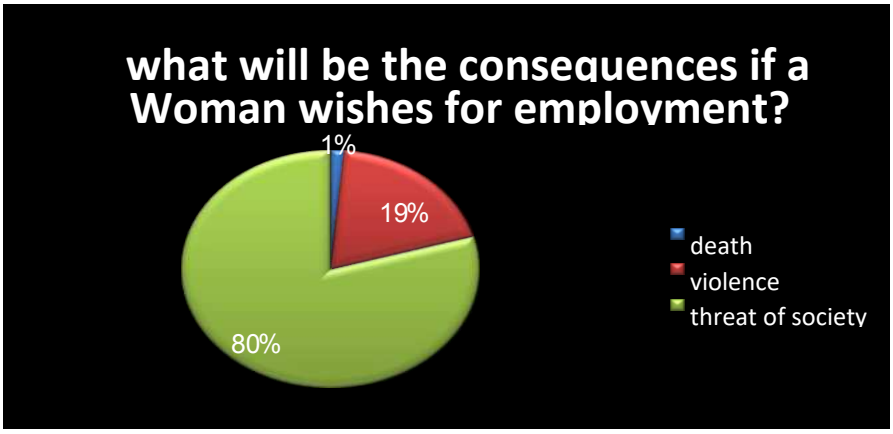
Out of the surveyed women, around 77% expressed a keen interest in pursuing employment opportunities, reflecting a robust aspiration for financial independence and a recognition of their own capabilities and strengths. This majority segment sees employment as a means to assert their autonomy and contribute meaningfully to society. Conversely, approximately 23% of the respondents voiced a disinterest in employment, although they did not offer specific explanations for their stance. This minority group's lack of enthusiasm for employment suggests a possible preference for the existing societal structure characterized by male dominance and patriarchy, where traditional gender roles are maintained. Various factors hinder women from pursuing employment in the region as shown in the diagram 4.3 below.

Diagram 4.3



A majority of respondents, comprising 64%, attribute this barrier to the cultural norms and values prevalent in Pashtun society, which strictly forbid women from working outside the home. According to these cultural norms, women's roles are confined to domestic duties, while men are expected to provide for the household financially. Additionally, 14% of respondents cite spousal disapproval as a hindrance, which is often influenced by Pashtun societal norms. Moreover, 16% mention parental restrictions on women's employment as a contributing factor. Only 6% of respondents attribute the restriction on women's employment to Islamic teachings. Moreover, the repercussion women working in the locality are shown in the diagram 4.4 below.

Diagram4.4

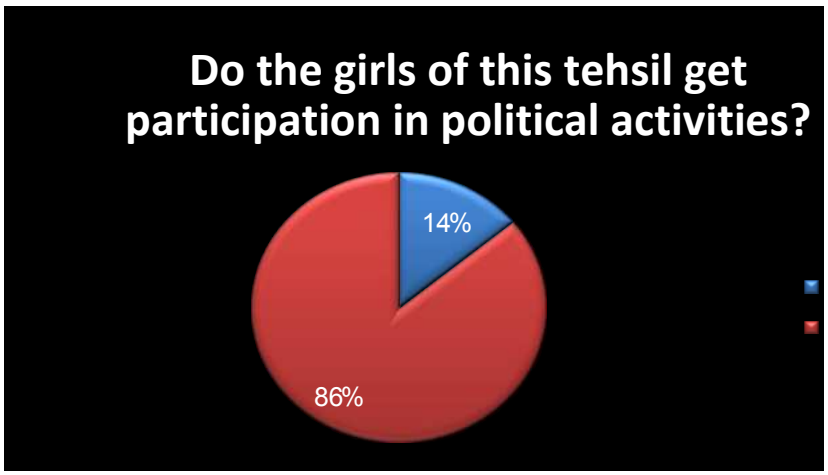


When considering the repercussions of women working, 19% of respondents highlighted the risk of facing violence from society, including sexual violence, harassment, or other forms of abuse. Meanwhile, 80% expressed concerns about experiencing societal threats, such as being subjected to taunts by both individuals and their families. Shockingly, only 1% mentioned the extreme consequence of potentially being killed by others if they pursued employment.

Political participation

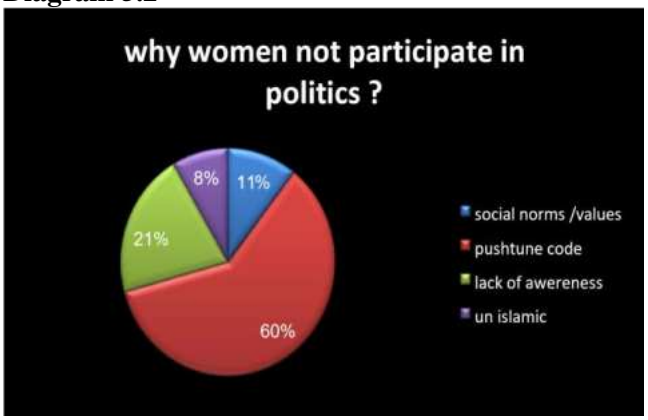
The involvement of women in politics is instrumental in driving a nation's prosperity and progress, as well as fostering gender equality. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainable development of a country. Increased participation of women in political spheres leads to enhanced leadership and decision-making capabilities, which are crucial for addressing the unique challenges faced by women. Women leaders and decision-makers are better equipped to comprehend and address these issues, enabling them to formulate effective laws and ensure their proper implementation for the benefit of all women. Moreover, the political participation of women in the locality is shown in the diagram 5.1 below.

Diagram 5.1



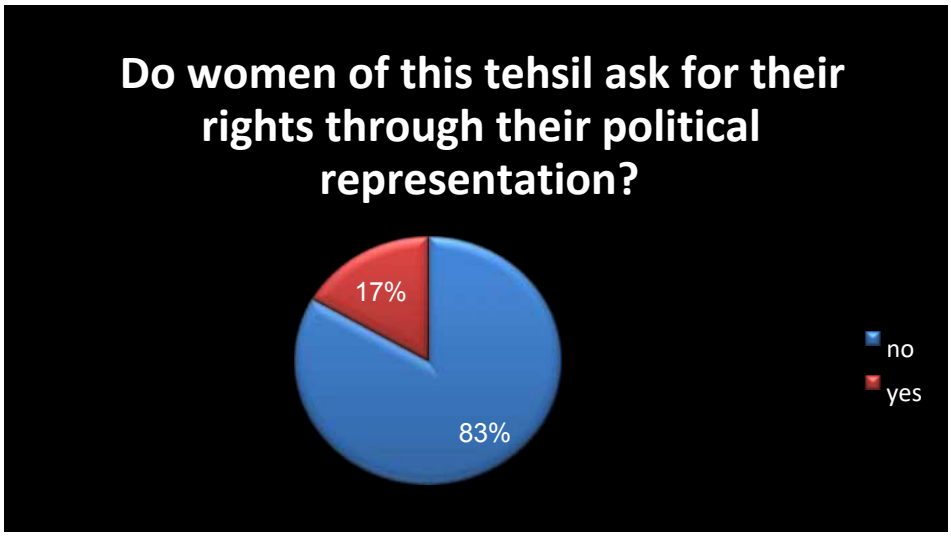
In this region, women's involvement in political activities is significantly lacking, as evidenced by the substantial 86% of respondents who reported their non-participation. This stark statistic underscores the prevalent disengagement of women from the political realm. Conversely, only 14% of women indicated their active involvement in such activities, indicating a small minority engaging in political affairs. The evident disparity underscores the urgent need for initiatives aimed at fostering greater female participation in politics. Overcoming barriers such as cultural norms, inadequate representation, and institutional biases is essential to promoting gender inclusivity in political processes. Encouraging and facilitating women's engagement in politics can lead to more representative governance and improved societal outcomes, thereby contributing to enhanced gender equality and broader social progress. The survey respondents cited various reasons for their lack of participation in political activities as shown in the diagram 5.2 below.

Diagram 5.2



A significant majority, accounting for 60% of women, attributed their non-participation to the constraints imposed by Pashtun culture, which restricts their involvement in activities such as education and employment, and prohibits women from venturing outside their homes. Additionally, 21% of respondents noted a lack of awareness among the local populace regarding the significance of political participation. Eleven percent of women cited adherence to established social norms as a deterrent, while 8% viewed women's political engagement as contrary to Islamic principles. These factors collectively contribute to the low levels of women's political participation in this Tehsil. in addition to this asking for women right is through its political representation is also quite low as shown in the diagram 5.3 below.

Diagram 5.3



The issue of women's rights is a global concern, particularly pronounced in Pakistan, especially within Pashtun society. When asked whether they advocate for their rights through political representation, a staggering 83% of respondents stated they do not. Only 17% answered affirmatively. This data highlights the lack of political protection for women's rights in the specified area. Moreover, there is a glaring absence of female representation from the entire Tehsil in political roles. Additionally, women are noticeably underrepresented in local, provincial, and central governments.

Conclusions

Concluding the collected data reveals the prevalent existence of structural and cultural violence against women in the region. Although girls can pursue education up to the higher secondary level, numerous obstacles like poverty, societal norms, and resource limitations impede more than sixty percent of them from attaining education beyond this stage. Regarding inheritance, a significant portion of the population—over sixty percent—either fails to recognize it as a right or neglects its practice altogether. Moreover, about seventy percent of girls' experience forced marriages without their input being considered. Despite a strong desire for employment, over half of the women in the area encounter limited job opportunities. Similarly, female political involvement is notably lacking, with approximately ninety percent of women refraining from political activities or representation, consequently leading to the infringement of their rights. Various factors contribute to the prevalence of violence against women in the region, including male dominance, adherence to Pashtun cultural norms, traditional values, limited access to education, misconceptions about Islam, lack of awareness, minimal political engagement, threats of violence, parental pressure, societal stigma, conflicts, inadequate legal frameworks, poverty, resource scarcity, and the preservation of honor.

Recommendations

- Implementing and enforcing effective laws and policies is crucial to reducing violence against women in the region. Proper execution of existing laws, supported by the government's legislative and executive branches, can significantly contribute to curbing violence against women. This requires translating laws from paper into action, with active support from the executive branch, ultimately leading to a decrease in violence against women.
- Education plays a pivotal role in empowering women and reducing violence against them. By providing education, women gain awareness of their rights, enabling them to assert themselves and demand equal treatment. Education also dispels misconceptions and traditional norms that perpetuate violence against women, fostering a culture of gender equality and empowerment.

- Addressing cultural norms and values is essential in combating violence against women. Deep-rooted cultural practices such as child marriage and restrictions on women's mobility contribute to perpetuating violence. Educating communities about the harmful effects of these practices and promoting more progressive norms can help dismantle barriers to women's rights.
- Creating employment opportunities for women is crucial for their economic empowerment and reducing vulnerability to violence. When women are financially independent, they are less likely to tolerate abuse and more capable of seeking help and leaving abusive situations. Additionally, employed women serve as role models for future generations, inspiring younger girls to pursue their aspirations.
- Increasing women's political participation is vital for addressing systemic issues contributing to violence against them. By participating in political processes, women can advocate for policies and laws that protect their rights and hold perpetrators of violence accountable. Political representation also challenges patriarchal attitudes and promotes gender equality in decision-making spaces.
- Dispelling misconceptions about Islam is essential in combatting violence against women, as religion often influences cultural practices and norms. Educating communities about the true teachings of Islam regarding women's rights, education, employment, and marriage can help challenge harmful beliefs and promote gender equality within religious frameworks
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) play a crucial role in combating violence against women by providing support services, advocating for policy change, and raising awareness. Collaborating with these organizations can amplify efforts to address violence against women and ensure survivors have access to essential resources and support.
- Introducing anti-violence education into school curricula can help prevent violence against women by fostering gender-sensitive attitudes and behaviors from a young age. By teaching students about respect, consent, and gender equality, schools can contribute to creating a culture of non-violence and gender equity.
- Implementing stringent oversight measures on revenue departments, particularly on officials responsible for property inheritance, can help protect women's rights. By holding these officials accountable for any fraudulent or illegal practices related to property inheritance, women can be safeguarded against exploitation and ensure their rightful inheritance.

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