

Counting the Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls In Pakistan

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a significant social, economic and public health problem. No country is immune from this problem and it impacts all socio-economic groups, all ethnicities and all ages. This does not mean it is inevitable; it can be transformed through political will, through increased investment in programmes and policies, and through community support for normative change.

Globally, 35% of women have experienced some form of violence in their lives. We know that this violence has implications for women's health and well-being, however, we have less understanding about the impacts of violence against women and girls on communities, businesses and on the national economy. While it has been estimated that violence against women and girls costs the global economy to the tune of US\$8 trillion¹ there are few studies, particularly of developing countries, that outline the national-level economic impacts and associated costs of such violence². In recognition of the dearth of



Women and girls in Shadadkot, north-west Sindh, Pakistan (Photo: Magnus Wolfe-Murra/DFID)

knowledge on the impacts and costs of VAWG, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has funded a project to investigate the social and economic costs of VAWG. Working in Pakistan, South Sudan and Ghana, the National University of Ireland, Galway with Ipsos MORI and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) in collaboration with in-country partners will be conducting research to estimate the economic losses caused by VAWG as well as the non-economic costs of violence that impact on economic growth, development and social stability.

BOX 1 : ABOUT THE WHAT WORKS PROJECT

The current project is Component Three of the What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls Programme funded by DFID. Component One of the programme is led by South Africa Medical Research Council, and is supporting and evaluating 14 interventions to prevent VAWG. In Pakistan, Component One of the What Works Global Programme, is working with Right to Play to conduct an extensive project evaluation, that will contribute to the global evidence about best-practice approaches to sport and schools-based work to challenge harmful gender beliefs and practices. Component Two, led by International Rescue Committee, is exploring the links between VAWG and conflict in South Sudan, and carrying out evaluation studies of specific interventions in conflict and humanitarian emergencies settings.

Component Three, Economic and Social Costs of Violence against Women and Girls, is a three year multi-country project that estimates the costs of VAWG, both social and economic, to individuals and households, businesses and communities, and states. It breaks new ground in understanding the impact of VAWG on community cohesion, economic stability and development and will provide further evidence for governments and the international community to address violence against women and girls globally.

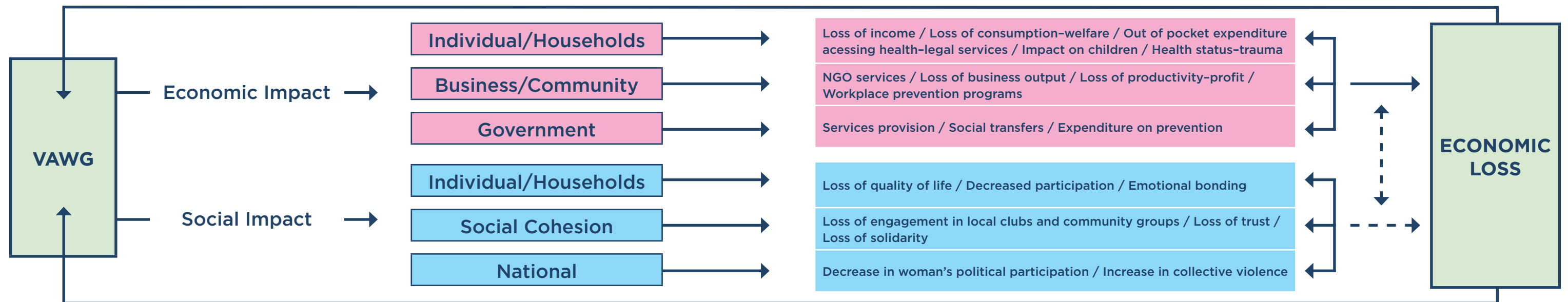
This project contends that the failure to eliminate VAWG constitutes a drag on national economies and on inclusive human development. There is thus strong incentive for investment by government and other stakeholders to address VAWG – the cost of inaction is significant. This project aims to build knowledge about the impacts of VAWG and thus to mobilise political will to eliminate violence worldwide. Through the development of new costing methodologies that can be applied within different national contexts, this project will provide policy makers with the tools to estimate the impact of VAWG. To develop such tools, it is necessary to collect data and evaluate methodologies within a range of political, economic, cultural and social contexts. This study is therefore being conducted in three countries in the Global South that exhibit marked differences in terms of context: South Sudan, Pakistan and Ghana.

In Pakistan, the project aims to fill the gaps in our understanding of the socio-economic impacts of VAWG, focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV). The project will go beyond costs to individuals by providing estimates of the loss to the overall economy of Pakistan. In addition, we examine costs arising from the impact of VAWG on social cohesion and political stability.

¹ Hoefler and Fearon: "Benefits and Costs of the Conflict and Violence Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda", 2015 http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/sites/default/files/conflict_assessment_-_hoefler_and_fearon_0.pdf

² Some examples do exist, but these are a rarity. Examples include: Duvvury et al, 2013: "Intimate Partner Violence: Economic Costs and Implications for Growth and Development" (Vietnam); Siddique, 2011: "Domestic Violence Against Women: Cost to the Nation" (Bangladesh); Vyas and Watts, 2013: "Estimating the Association between Women's Earnings and Partner Violence: Evidence from the 2008-2009 Tanzania National Panel Survey"

Figure 1: Impact Pathways of VAWG on the Economy: a Conceptual Model



THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this project, we argue that VAWG not only impacts on individual women and their families but also ripples through society and the economy at large. To understand how this occurs we provide above a graph of our conceptual framework.

We show here how VAWG has economic impacts and social impacts. We also show that these impacts occur not only at the individual level (such as through missed days at work, health costs due to injuries and psychological distress) but also at the community/business level and at the state level. Economic impacts at each of these levels, including lost income at the individual level and loss of economic outputs for businesses that erode national tax takes, undermine economic growth. Social costs also accrue through the individual, community and state level. These impacts have serious consequences for well-being and capabilities, for social cohesion and participation, and for social stability. These impacts cannot be immediately monetized; however, we hypothesise that over time many of these impacts are translated into economic costs, through for instance, chronic disability, limited access and performance in education, and increases in social instability and conflict. See Figure 1 above.

This project recognises that the impacts of VAWG at these different levels interact with each other, as do both social and economic impacts, meaning that it is difficult to simply aggregate costs across levels. The research project aims to explore these diverse and dynamic impacts with a view to highlighting their macro-level influence on both economic and social development.

BOX 2: PREVALENCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) IN PAKISTAN

IPV includes physical, sexual and psychological violence committed by any intimate partner.

The Pakistani Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2012 – 2013⁵ is the only source that provides comprehensive national and provincial level data on domestic violence. It found that among ever-married women aged between 15 and 49, more than one in three (39%) have experienced physical and/ or emotional violence from their spouse since the age of 15. In KP province, this figure rises to 56.6%. 52% of Pakistani women who had ever experienced domestic violence never sought help or never told anybody about the violence they had experienced.

Smaller, more detailed studies suggest that the prevalence of IPV in Pakistan is even higher than indicated by the PDHS. In 2012 a household survey of over 4,000 women in six districts was carried out by Rutgers WPF indicated that among ever-married women, 85% had ever experienced domestic violence⁶.

⁵ <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR290/FR290.pdf>

⁶ Kanwal Quyyam: "Domestic Violence against women: prevalence and men's perception in PGRN districts of Pakistan"

VAWG IN PAKISTAN

Violence against women is persistent and pervasive in Pakistan, affecting all provinces and all social groups. This research will address intimate partner violence (IPV), and also non-partner sexual violence (NPSV) including child sexual abuse, as well as some cultural forms of violence.

Currently, the data available on the prevalence of different forms of VAWG is very limited in Pakistan. Rape became illegal in Pakistan with the passing of the Protection of Women Act (2006) however, it is rarely reported and few cases are ever prosecuted. Cultural forms of violence persist, including forced marriage, honour-based violence and acid attacks³, but their prevalence is hard to quantify. Sexual harassment in the workplace is nearly ubiquitous, with one study finding that 93% of women working in public or private sectors were sexually harassed by supervisors or senior colleagues⁴.

³ See for example Women, Conflict and Violence in Pakistan, Crisis Group Asia Report No 265, April 2015. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/asia/south-asia/pakistan/265-women-violence-and-conflict-in-pakistan.pdf>

⁴ Pakistan Alliance Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace: "Situational Analysis on Sexual Harassment" <http://www.aasha.org.pk/aasha%20publications/Situational%20Analysis%20on%20Sexual%20Harassment.pdf>

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

The government of Pakistan has committed to addressing gender inequality, a major driver of violence against women. Pakistan is a signatory to key international instruments including the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Since 2006, a number of laws have been passed aimed at reversing deep-seated gender discrimination and endemic violence and impunity for violence. These include: the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2010 (on sexual harassment); the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010; the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2011; The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2010 and The Women in Distress and Detention Fund Act, 2011. However, advances in legislation have not yet had a significant or visible impact on prevalence. Overwhelming cultural norms, coupled with dysfunctional implementation and a lack of political will, result in a continued epidemic of violence against women and girls.

COSTS OF VAWG TO PAKISTAN

This novel and ambitious study aims to quantify the impact of violence on Pakistani economy and society, to an extent not previously attempted. While the often devastating impacts of violence against women are reasonably well-understood at an individual level (including: compromised reproductive health; poor mental health; social isolation; and even death), there is little evidence as to how the cumulative impact of violence against women undermines Pakistani development as a whole.

Some indications of the impact of violence on the economy have been documented, in a study by SPDC entitled "The Socio-economic Cost of Violence against Women: A Case Study of Karachi" (see box 2). This study points to some of the many ways in which VAWG places a drain on the Pakistani economy and society.

BOX 3: "THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF KARACHI"

This 2012 study identified the impacts of violence experienced by 50 women in the city of Karachi. It shows the devastating economic and personal effect of violence on individuals and families, and points to the many ways in which violence undermines the wider economy and society:

- 44% of the women studied had sustained physical injuries; while all suffered psychological impacts (depression, stress or trauma).
- 77% sought healthcare, at an average cost (including transport) of Rs10,100 per incident.
- Just 18% sought support from the police, where an average cost of Rs34,900 was incurred in the filing of a formal report (FIR and formal registration of the case). The cost of transport to access the police was, on average, €Rs1,500.
- 42% sought legal support, at an average cost of Rs48,200, plus average transport costs for repeat visits of Rs2,100.
- Most healthcare costs were born by the victim herself or by her mother – although in some cases others (husband/ family) paid these costs. Where victims accessed judicial services, in up to 70% of cases, the costs were covered by an NGO or a shelter home.
- The majority of women surveyed were not in paid employment; but of those who were, a number left their work immediately after the violent incident, resulting in a drop in family income.

Source: "The Socio-Economic Costs of Violence Against Women: A Case Study of Karachi": Social Policy and Development Centre.

HOW WILL WE ESTIMATE COSTS?

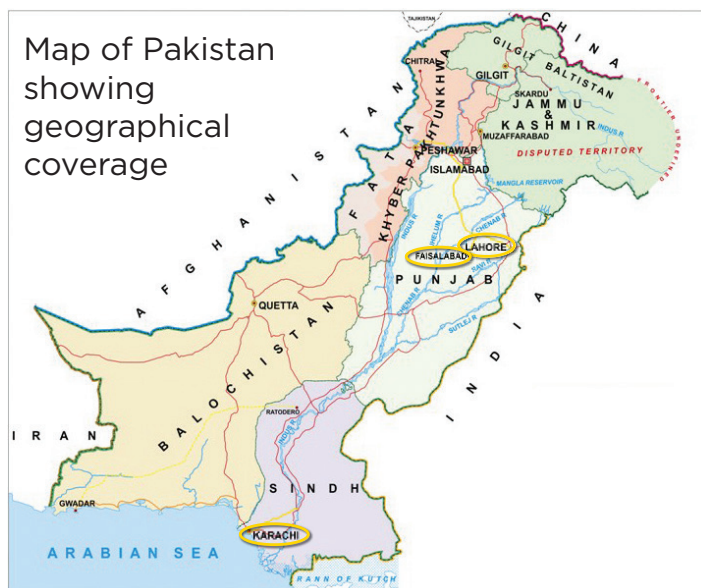
Globally, the costing studies that exist tend to concentrate on developed OECD economies, and no comprehensive study exists for Pakistan. Where research does exist for developing economies, this mainly focuses on intimate partner violence. The current study considers IPV, but also non-partner violence faced by women and girls in schools, workplaces and/or public places. The study also moves beyond aggregating costs to individual women and families, to estimating the overall macro economic impact of VAWG, and the impact on society as a whole.

The study will use multiple innovative quantitative and qualitative methodologies. These include: household surveys with 3,000 women; surveys with male and female employees in 100 businesses; gender responsive budgeting to identify the level of investment by government in addressing VAWG; narrative interviews and focus group discussions; along with innovative analytical approaches.

The framework of the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) will be used to estimate the macroeconomic loss due to violence. This approach will capture the structural interlinkages that exist within real economies. For example, the loss of income for an individual woman as a result of violence impacts the economy in two ways: firstly through losses in output for a particular enterprise and sector, and secondly through losses in her consumption of goods and services. As such, the SAM framework can be used to account for the interaction or multiplier effects of costs at the individual/household, business/community and government/state level.

WHERE WILL THE RESEARCH BE CARRIED OUT?

The project will be carried out in the major regions of the country, with the exception of the Khyber Pakhtunkwa and some of the tribal areas in western Pakistan. The sample will be 3,000 women drawn from four provinces - Balochistan, some areas of North West Frontier Province / Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh. In addition 100 businesses (small, medium and large enterprises) in the cities of Karachi, Lahore, and Faisalabad as shown circled in yellow on the map below, will be sampled, and a minimum of 500 employees (male and female) will be surveyed through an anonymous self-filled questionnaire.



Cities included in fieldwork for the business survey

WHO IS CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH?

The research is carried out by an international consortium in partnership with Social Policy and Development Centre, based in Karachi. In addition a National Advisory Council of key national, provincial and local stakeholders has been established to provide policy and technical oversight. The NAC will ensure that the research is relevant and accurate, and that it is used effectively to advocate for increased emphasis on the elimination of violence against women and girls.

Research Lead for Pakistan: Social Policy and Development Centre, Pakistan

Principal Investigator: Dr Nata Duvvury, NUI Galway

Other Consortium Members: NUI Galway (Ireland); Ipsos MORI (UK); International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) (USA)

BOX 4: NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mrs. Mahtab Akbar Rashdi,
Member of Provincial Assembly (PML-F)

Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, Chairperson,
National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW)

Dr. Yasmin Zaidi Ph.D, Director,
Centre for Gender & Policy Studies

Ms. Farhat Shaikh, Gender Advisor, CIDA-PSU

Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Chairperson,
Provincial Commission on the Status of Women, Punjab

Mr. Niaz Ahmed Siddiqui,
Inspector General of Sindh Police (Rt.)

Ms. Kausar S. Khan, Associate Professor,
Aga Khan University, Karachi

Ms. Afiya S. Zia

Dr. Aisha Ghaus-Pasha, Finance Minister,
Province of Punjab

Ms. Nazish Brohi

Dr. Saba Gul Khattak

Katja Jobe (Senior Social Development Advisor/
Team Leader Democracy & Accountability), DFID

HOW WILL THE RESEARCH BE USED?

In Pakistan, this research will be used to provide evidence about the urgency of eliminating violence against women and girls. Through the NAC, pressure will be brought to bear for accelerated legislation for gender equality and against violence, and increased investment for violence prevention and response. In consultation with the NAC a national research uptake strategy and targeted policy advocacy strategy will be developed to ensure that the research findings and recommendations will be empirical evidence used by variety of actors including civil society organisations, ministerial policy makers, and political representatives.

