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Not Accepting Abuse as the Norm: Local Forms of Institutional Reform to Improve Reporting on Domestic Violence in Punjab

By Maryam Tanwir,¹ Shailaja Fennell,² Hafsa Rehman Lak,³ and Salman Sufi⁴

Abstract

Gendered social norms are difficult to overcome, due to a lack of consensus among legal, religious, and social institutions on the direction that will result in new social norms. In the case of Pakistan, which ranks sixth on the list of the most dangerous countries for women, it is not possible to change gendered social norms regarding domestic violence by only focusing on legal reform since, in its social context, the act of domestic violence is not in itself regarded as a serious offence. This article explores reform in Punjab, where deeply entrenched legal structural obstacles and discriminatory gender norms prevent women from accessing justice. The paper draws on a new framework for influencing changes in individuals' behaviour to reduce the condoning of domestic violence. Using a mixed-methods approach the paper introduces a new initiative of women for institutional reform undertaken by the Strategic Reforms Unit (SRU) in Pakistan, to examine the role of social norms in normalizing the practice of domestic violence. This initiative provides an opportunity for examining how these prevalent social norms can be changed by both improving women's access to legal processes regarding the registration and prosecution of crimes as well as addressing public shame associated with the wearing of a tracking device by the assailant.

This model of institutional reform of the criminal justice system could provide the way forward to close the large gap between incidents of violence against women (VAW) and the low level of convictions in many societies. The paper concludes that such institutional reform could be adapted for use in other countries to comprehensively reduce VAW cases and to increase the success in prosecution and sentencing of perpetrators of such crimes.

Keywords: domestic violence, Pakistan, gendered norms, judicial reform, institutional reform.

Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed a profusion of new thinking on the philosophical and political conceptualizations of gender equality. This calls for the re-appropriation of gender equality by scholars in the global South and using new formulations of

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gender equality that emerge within developing countries (Fennell et al., 2016). The reworking of national gender agendas, eschewing international agendas that uncritically import individualistic models of gender, and designing new gender equality models that take into account historical and cultural contexts within which patriarchy is constructed enable a more effective focus on gender relations and gendered violence (Fennell and Arnot, 2009). A consequence of the shift in the geographical locus of researching gender relations from the global North to national contexts is the encouragement of new local formulations for addressing gender inequalities (Wilson, 2015).

Foregrounding local constructions of gendered social norms facilitates the forging of a framework that can directly address both the existing power relations in a society as well as more readily identify forms of resistance to gendered hierarchies. One line of new thinking has been with respect to the matter of gendered social norms, which are associated with the perpetuation of traditional or religious beliefs, that are difficult to overcome, as change is only possible if there can be agreement and coordination among institutions to move towards the acceptance of a new social norm (Hoff and Pandey, 2006). Social norms frame individual behavior in terms of what is acceptable to the community as a whole and are robust, as the widespread acceptance of the norms ensure adherence to the prescribed forms of behavior (Coleman, 1990). While communities cling strongly to their ways of doing and being,⁵ individuals feel compelled to follow these norms to ensure approval by other community members. Disobeying social norms can result in punishment that can be extremely harsh and take the form of shame, embarrassment, ostracism, or even physical violence and abuse. On the other hand, engaging with communities to address the gender inequality that is present in their interactions raises the possibility of confronting the prevalent social norms. In particular, working at the collective level and with the support of a social movement could work to increase individual agency that could overcome the hold of traditional rules (Pearse and Connell, 2015).

The possibility designing a framework to change individual behavior to reduce the condoning of domestic violence would further the aims of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in countries with very different institutional and social contexts. In particular, it could provide a way to devise policies that can be effective in meeting the General Recommendations for Women's Access to Justice,⁶ Article III D(c), which calls for states to “take effective measures to protect women against secondary victimization in interactions with law enforcement,” and III D(d), which calls for them to “take appropriate measures to create supportive” measures to claim rights, report crimes, participate in proceedings, and “to prevent retaliation against women seeking recourse in the justice (system).”⁷

It is in this context that a new initiative for institutional reform undertaken by the Strategic Reforms Unit (SRU)⁸ in Pakistan, based on a recognition of the role of social norms in normalizing

⁵ The framework of “doings and beings” is a central conceptual tool in the capability framework that emphasizes the importance of individual agency in advancing empowerment (Sen, 1999).

⁶ CEDAW/C/GC/33, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation on Women's Access to Justice, 23 July 2015.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Formerly known as Special Monitoring Unit (Law and Order wing), the SRU was formed in September 2014 to function as a Policy Implementation and Reform Cell as part of the Chief Minister's Office, Government of Punjab, Pakistan. With the co-author, Salman Sufi, heading SRU from September 2014 - June 2018, the unit, through its innovative measures, devised more than 30 seminal initiatives. The reforms spearheaded and executed during his term include women's protection reforms, women-on-wheels campaign, model graveyards (Shehr-e-Khamoshaan – one-stop shop for burial services' provision); Excise and Taxation Reforms, and Traffic Police Reforms. Co-author Hafsa Lak served as Deputy Team Leader at SRU till December 2017.

the practice of domestic violence, is used as a case study to examine how social norms might become a tool for changing social practices. The programme was initiated through the promulgation of a new act⁹ to ensure that effective measures have been taken to streamline the existing fragmented case-flow process for violence against women (VAW) crimes. The intention was to strengthen prosecution for such offences and to protect and rehabilitate VAW survivors. The project facilitates the capacity of women to access the law using mobile phones¹⁰ and to also use the services of the “all-women service provision” in the *Violence against Women Centers* (VAWCs).¹¹ The new system overcomes the obstacle to providing justice to women in an existing institutional context where a very large majority of men in the police force did not regard violence against women as a serious offence (Solotaroff and Pande, 2014).

This act and the VAWCs¹² provide an opportunity for examining how prevalent social norms regarding the acceptability of domestic and sexual violence can be changed by both improving women’s access to processes of the law, such as registering and prosecuting crimes, as well as by changing attitudes towards assailants with the public shame of wearing a tracking device. This design of institutional reform of the criminal justice system could provide the way forward for dealing with the large gap between the number of incidents of violence against women and the rate of conviction, which is low due to the prevailing gendered social norms in many societies.

Women, Inequality, and the Law

Inequalities between men and women are present and pervasive in almost all spheres of society and across the world, though the types and extent of inequalities vary across countries. In the case of Pakistan, there are extreme forms of gender inequality evident in the spheres of both domestic and public life. According to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2016, Pakistan ranks 143 out of 144 countries in the gender inequality index¹³ and sharp inequalities are evident in access to education, health facilities, and labour market participation (Siegmann and Majid, 2014).

While the female labor force participation rate in Pakistan (24%) is not significantly different from the South Asian average (32%), it still ranks tenth lowest out of 189 countries. Fewer than one third of the 31 million working-age women are considered economically active, which is the outcome of various economic and social factors such as: educational attainment, mobility, fertility rates and marital age, and economic growth/cyclical effects that negatively impact the employment of women (ILO, 2013). This low level of participation in the economy results in higher dependency rates and greater vulnerability levels among Pakistani women.

⁹ Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016.

¹⁰ SRU, in collaboration with the Punjab Safe Cities Authority and the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, launched the Women Safety Smart Phone application in January 2017, which allows users to inform law enforcement of any harassment and violence-related incidents. This application, like SRU’s Women-on-Wheels initiative, is not part of the Act, but is part of comprehensive women’s protection reforms designed and implemented by SRU to supplement said legislation.

¹¹ This innovation has overcome the challenge presented by the previous system of recording crimes against women due to a fragmented case-flow.

¹² The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016 ensures that VAWCs are established in each district across the province. The pilot VAWC was made operational in Multan on 25th March 2017. After the establishment of the center at Multan, plans have been finalized for the roll-out of centers across the province.

¹³ This is behind Bangladesh and India, which rank 72nd and 87th, respectively.

Moreover, these patriarchal social norms that are keeping down participation rates also play a role in controlling and subjugating women in the public and private spheres. The mechanism of control operates through an institutionalization of a set of restrictive codes of behavior that promotes gender segregation and establishes an ideology that associates this segregation with female virtue that is closely intertwined with upholding family honour.¹⁴ According to a 2018 report published by Thompson Reuters, the level of discrimination against women in Pakistan places the country among the top 4 countries in the world in relation to gender discrimination.¹⁵ The forms of discrimination include job discrimination; an inability to earn a livelihood; discriminatory land, property, or inheritance rights; a lack of access to education; and a lack of access to adequate nutrition. There is also a huge gender gap in the access to human resources and, consequently, female participation in the Pakistani workforce is limited to informal and low-paid employment¹⁶; only a very small proportion of women working in legal and political institutions in Pakistan.

The legal and bureaucratic professions are male-dominated, and only a small minority of employees in these sectors are women.¹⁷ This gender bias against women can result in legal systems being unintentionally complicit in the oppression and subordination of women. A legal system that is inaccessible to women due to a gender bias can result in women becoming vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and discrimination rather than promoting their human development and enhancing their access to other rights (Domingo and O'Neil, 2014). This is even more likely where the law has historically been relatively inactive in regulating the "private sphere" and does not regard the patriarchal imposition of social norms as an aberration. This perspective can encompass attitudes towards domestic violence, sexual freedom, marriage, and reproductive decisions, as well as women's economic rights, such as the right to have a job and to manage and inherit assets (UN WOMEN, 2011).

In male-dominated legal systems, where social norms have created an ideology that discrimination against women and inflicting violence on women is acceptable, it is difficult to get across the notion to patriarchal groups in the country that women's access to justice is inalienable (Gelsthorpe, 2004). The imposition of patriarchy, defined by the UN as the shaping of society around men's control over women and children within the family and the replication of this unequal relationship in other spheres of life, upholds this form of gender inequality (UN, 2008). The political philosophy that undergirds patriarchy divides the world into two spheres, the male public sphere and the female private sphere, and these are not treated equally by the law (Fennell, 2009:26). Within these divides, the law is associated with the public sphere, while the rights of the man to manage the private sphere without interference are protected as his "private property" (Fennell, 2009:27). Moreover, the law thus tacitly privileges male interests by not recognizing the different ways in which the law treats men and women, the different ways in which women and men face abuses of rights, or the different outcomes of seeking justice for men and women on account of gender hierarchies in the family and society (Irving, 2008). The implication of not taking into account these differences is a form of "gender blind" policy making (Elson, 2002) that refuses to acknowledge the manner in which institutional rules can work to deny women access to

¹⁴ For detailed information see: Hadi, Abdu, 2017 Patriarchy and Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan, *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research*

¹⁵ For detailed information see: <http://poll2018.trust.org/country/?id=pakistan>

¹⁶ Tanwir and Sidebottom, 2019

¹⁷ Tanwir and Fennell (2010) found that the representation of women in the civil service in Pakistan remained dismally low.

their rights. Such gender blindness in the legal sphere can result in women being unable to get legal redress in relation to the violence they experience in the family and community.

It is important that this differential position of women and men in a community should not be put down simply as a matter of culture. A recent review of the state of violence over the past two decades undertaken by the UN Special Rapporteur, cautions against simplistic pronouncements of discriminatory practices as being a consequence of “culture,” and this needs to be replaced by a recognition of a “universal patriarchal culture” with roots in economic and political gender inequalities, which influences the ways in which local cultures are practiced (United Nations, 2009:2). This line of thinking builds on the debate on the complex nature of gender relations that emerged out of an earlier and important feminist legal debate of the dangers of “essentialism” (Charlesworth, 1995). Furthermore, while states are responsible for maintaining patriarchy through their legal systems, they can also play a role in breaking away from the culture of gendered violence. In the case of domestic violence, the report suggests that the way forward would be through increasing safety for women fleeing violent homes, bringing in policies for the prevention of domestic violence rather than only punishment, and particularly on using education in society at large as well as in the judiciary to assert that domestic violence is not tolerated in the society (UN, 2009:27).

States are also differentially able to enact anti-patriarchal legal policy based on their level of economic development, their dependency on other states or international institutions, and the responsiveness of political leaders to feminist demands from civil society or elsewhere. In 1979, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – the most far-reaching international commitment of governments working for gender equality – to ban every kind of gender discrimination prevalent in society.¹⁸

CEDAW's 2015 General Recommendation on women's access to justice established the incontrovertible link between access to justice and gender equality. The recommendation asserted that deeply entrenched legal structural obstacles and discriminatory gender norms prevent women from accessing justice, while justice institutions too are dominated by these same obstacles and norms (OHRH, 2015).

The international endorsement of CEDAW principles spearheads the demand that states ensure that their legal systems prevent violence against women and, where necessary, change the law to overcome the reinforcement of gender inequalities on account of historical, social, or economic features. This is of particular importance in South Asia, where community and sub-national social norms reinforce gender inequality and violence against women has taken on deplorable forms (Solotoroff and Pande, 2014:78).

The CEDAW is an international institutional collaborative process founded on recommendations made by national governments and nationally-registered NGOs to the expert committee. The role of women's organizations written into the CEDAW provides an important avenue for civil society organizations to present an alternative report on the processes in place to reduce violence against women (VAW), thereby providing a possibility for institutional change through societal interventions.

In the case of Pakistan, there has been a long-standing concern that the structural nature of gender inequalities that operate in society has brought about objections to the imposition of

¹⁸ The Convention came into force on September 3, 1981, after it had been ratified by 20 states. In 2015, 187 (out of 194) states have ratified the Convention. CEDAW's 30 articles call for the elimination of gender inequality as defined in areas of the labor market, the home, civil society, culture, and political institutions (UN Women, 2009).

international agendas for gender equality and opposition to the full-scale adoption of the CEDAW convention (Sardar Ali, 2012). In contrast to the reluctance expressed by national governmental institutions since the adoption of CEDAW in Pakistan in 1981, as evident from the fifteen-year-long struggle of civil society organizations¹⁹ to ensure a full acceding to the requirements of gender equality and opposition to violence against women that is required by CEDAW (ibid.), it was the active engagement of NGOs spearheaded by women's organizations across the country that resulted in two alternative reports being submitted by civil society organizations – the first by the Aurat Foundation in 2012 and the second by the Shirkat Gah Foundation on Talibanisation and Poor Governance in Pakistan in 2013.

Over 900 women's organizations have supported the work of representations to CEDAW and have pushed for both an increase in legislation as well demands for more avenues for women's voices, indicating that there has been a very active role of women's organizations in setting up institutions that advocate for the importance of gender equality and the elimination of practices that approve of violence against women. The establishment of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), a statutory body set up in 2000, was a first step in this direction, and in more recent years it has been at the forefront of demands for reducing domestic violence in Pakistan as well as reducing discrimination against women in the public sphere. These demands are made at a time when there have been growing concerns, both internationally and nationally, about the vulnerable condition in which women find themselves due to structural gender inequalities in Pakistan.

Violence against Women in Pakistan

Recent polls have ranked Pakistan sixth on the list of most dangerous countries for women.²⁰ Women are subjected to violence that includes acid attacks; female genital mutilation; child marriage; forced marriage; stoning, physical abuse, or mutilation as a form of punishment/retribution; and female infanticide. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's annual report (2015) documented more than 900 rapes and sexual assaults, 279 instances of domestic violence, 143 of burning, 987 honor crimes, 833 kidnappings, and 777 suicides and attempted suicides.²¹

The following research uses a case study of institutional reform in the province of Punjab.²² The district-level statistics provided by the provincial government of Punjab for the period 2012-15 indicate the acts of domestic violence that have been reported in each district, and the report levels are particularly high in the eastern districts (Sargodha, Vehari, and Multan) and in the south. The disaggregated data on the various types of offences within the category of violence against women (VAW), collected by the Office of the Inspector General of Punjab Police in 2013 and 2014, indicate that the largest percentage of offences fall in the category of domestic violence, followed by rape and by assault (section 354 PPC).²³

¹⁹ The Aurat Foundation, established in 1986, has been lobbying against political parties' manifestos in an attempt to make them more gender aware.

²⁰ Thomas Reuters Foundation expert poll 2018 on cultural conditions have placed Pakistan 4th on this list.

²¹ State of Human Rights in 2015, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, available at http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Women_12.pdf

²² Administratively, Punjab is divided into 36 districts.

²³ Pakistan Penal Code (XLV of 1860), available at <https://www.oecd.org/site/adboecdanti-corruptioninitiative/46816797.pdf>

The figures on VAW criminal cases registered, provided by the Punjab Government for the years 2013-14, are set out in the table below.

Table 1. Types of criminal cases registered in Punjab (2013-14)

Types of Crime	Reported 2013	Reported 2014 (till Sep)
Domestic violence (murder)	819	752
Domestic violence (beating)	676	537
Domestic Violence (any other)	222	242
Honor Killing	251	214
Acid Burning	13	14
Stove Burning	9	1
Vani ²⁴	3	6
Rape	1998	1945
Gang Rape	147	195
Custodial Rape	0	1
Incest	6	9
Harassment at workplace (physical)	0	0
Harassment at workplace (sexual)	27	26
Harassment at workplace (psychological)	0	0
Any other violence	1936	1606
	6107	5548

Source: SRU, Chief Minister office, Punjab.

Despite the high number of cases relating to domestic violence, more than one third of all criminal cases as shown in Table 1, the conviction rate for violence against women is a mere 1-2.5% of all registered cases.²⁵ This dismally low conviction rate has been a further sense of distress for the victims, as some resorted to extreme measures such as setting themselves on fire to bring attention to their neglected cases. In 2014, Amina Bibi of Muzaffargarh district was reported to have set herself on fire due to the uncooperative attitude of the police in undertaking an investigation into her attempted rape case, and she succumbed to her injuries.²⁶ Another rape

²⁴ Exchanging women to settle disputes.

²⁵ Punjab Prosecution Department 2013-14; Punjab Police 2013-2014

²⁶ Punjab Chief Minister's Protocol Office, 2014; Heather Saul, "Pakistani gang rape victim Amina Bibi dies after setting herself on fire," 15 March 2014, Independent, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistani-gang-rape-victim-amina-bibi-dies-after-setting-herself-on-fire-9194322.html>

victim, Shaheena Bibi, doused herself with petrol and attempted to set herself on fire in front of Press club, Multan, in 2014 to draw attention to her case.²⁷

The official figures, which are corroborated by independent annual qualitative assessments of reported rape in Pakistan,²⁸ indicate that in the period 2008–12, rape consistently comprised 10 to 11% of total reported violent crimes against women. It is also estimated that rape is consistently among one of the top three to five categories of VAW cases in Punjab (Azhar, 2011; Perveen, 2012). The recent report published by the Aurat Foundation in 2011 confirms that “at least 5827 incidents were reported in which 6232 women became victims of violence” in 2015.²⁹ The Punjab police department reports recorded that in the period 2013-2014, each day an average of 66 women were murdered or attempted to be murdered, 8 raped, 11 battered and assaulted, and 32 women are abducted. The large proportion of VAW related cases in the province and the associated low rate of conviction has come to be regarded as a matter of great concern among not only the women’s organizations, but also for the Government of Punjab, particularly after the public protests by VAW victims about the lack of support evident among the Punjab police for taking up their cases. In the light of these public protests, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, directed the SRU to conduct an investigation into the low conviction rate.

The State of VAW and the Forging of Institutional Reform in Punjab

The investigation was conducted as a collaborative exercise, partnering with state institutions including the judiciary, police, and civil society organizations. The region selected for reform was the southern districts of the province of Punjab, the division of Multan, which comprises the districts of Khanewal, Lodhran, Multan, and Vehari, the latter two being among the districts with the highest number of VAW cases.³⁰

Human and social development profile of the region

The southern district of the province of Punjab has low levels of human development.³¹ It is predominantly a feudal economy³² with high levels of poverty, low levels of literacy,³³ insufficient health facilities,³⁴ and poor infrastructure, all coupled with extreme electricity

²⁷ Punjab Chief Minister’s Protocol Office, 2014; “Multan: Family of rape victim protest outside press club,” *Dunya News*, 24 September 2014, available at <http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/238062-Multan-Family-of-rape-victim-protest-outside-pres>

²⁸ Conducted by the Aurat Foundation

²⁹ “Violence against women on the rise in Punjab,” *Pakistan Today*, 20 July 2016, available at <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/07/20/violence-against-women-on-the-rise-in-punjab/>

³⁰ Additionally, there were concerns that there was significant underreporting of some specific types of VAW cases, such as those that resulted from acid attacks that were most predominant in the cotton-growing season, where acid is used in the process of cleaning of cotton.

³¹ For detailed information see Ali Cheema et al., 2008.

³² Where the agricultural production is controlled by the landlords.

³³ The women also report poor access to education, which translates to an impediment to their economic independence and cognizance of their legal rights (Naqvi and Ibrar, 2015).

³⁴ The women repeatedly report poor access to health facilities for both themselves and their children.

shortages.³⁵ These constraints within this strongly patrilineal and patriarchal society contributes to the high level of violence and VAW against women in the region (Qaisarani, et. al. 2016).³⁶

It was this economic and social context and the failure of delivering justice that prompted the SRU to examine the procedures by which VAW cases are registered by the provincial police, and how their investigations unfold leading to prosecution or the lack thereof in this region.

The SRU's two-year, evaluation-based design of an institutional intervention was buttressed by a multi-stakeholder analysis of the existing case-flow process³⁷ by examining the procedures involved in the registration of cases. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, comprising of an analysis of the following sources of government data collected by different provincial agencies: (a) provincial level data of VAW to determine the extent and forms of violence against women in Punjab, collected by the Punjab Police Department between January 2013 and September 2014; (b) data collected from the Punjab Forensic Science Agency to ascertain the results of DNA evidence tests that were performed during the time period of 2013-14; (c) data from the Punjab Prosecution Department regarding the number of reported cases which finally were taken to court and the convictions, if any; and (d) police and prosecution data on the number of cases resolved through mediation/negotiation in the police station and/or court. Furthermore, a desk review of VAW laws in the Criminal Procedure Code of 1898 and Pakistan Penal Code of 1860 was undertaken. Finally, individual interviews were conducted with police officials, the prosecutor general's office, prosecution and health department officials, legislatures, and members of the civil society (see Appendix 2).

The SRU team examined the existing sets of rules and standard operating procedures of the Medico Legal Surgeon Office, the Punjab Forensic Science Agency, and the Prosecution and Police Departments. They also reviewed the organizational manuals and operating procedures of the existing VAW shelters and organizations in Pakistan such as Dastak, the Aurat Foundation, War against Rape, and Justice for Pakistan. Best practices in the international realm, such as those used in the one-stop crisis centers in Malaysia and Bangladesh as precursors to the design of the proposed VAWC in Multan, were reviewed. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the VAWC were developed in collaboration with the International Human Rights Law Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School, which had a previous record of international research analysis of the effectiveness of VAW shelters.

After the preliminary findings, the SRU researchers' team interviewed victims to get their perspectives on the incidence of gendered violence and then on their experience of accessing justice. Fifty victims were interviewed and the information obtained was triangulated with data collected by the Aurat Foundation and the Dastak Foundation, as well as a comprehensive review

³⁵ Hourly electricity outages make life intolerable in the summer when temperatures often exceed 40 degrees centigrade. The severe electricity shortage in rural Punjab has resulted in very difficult living conditions and is often reported in interviews as a trigger for angry outbursts.

³⁶ Several VAW cases highlighted in the media illustrate how the Chief Minister and his office had to personally intervene to ensure a First Information Report (FIR) is registered and an investigation conducted properly. Please see: Heather Saul, "Pakistani gang rape victim Amina Bibi dies after setting herself on fire," 15 March 2014, Independent, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistani-gang-rape-victim-amina-bibi-dies-after-setting-herself-on-fire-9194322.html>

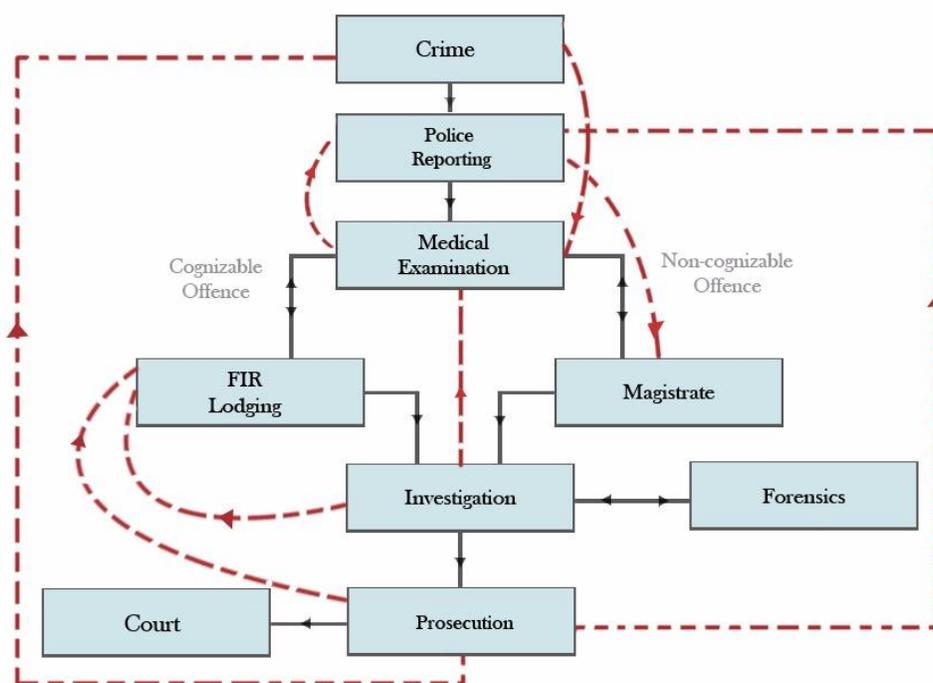
³⁷ see Figure 1, Pakistan Criminal Procedure Code (PCC) of 1898. The Code covers both cognizable and non-cognizable acts and the SRU began by setting out the order of procedures with regard to VAW cases.

of news articles and relevant reports from women's organizations.³⁸ Some 20 representatives of civil society organizations from Lahore and Multan were also interviewed.

Researchers visited police stations and Tehsil Head Quarter hospitals to examine the procedures regarding the medical examination of victims. After gathering the information, detailed interviews were held with healthcare providers, prosecution staff, police officers, female legislators, members of civil society, and heads of crisis centers, as well as staff from the Punjab Forensic Science Agency, the Medico Legal Surgeon's Office, the Social Welfare Department, and the Women's Development Department to refine ideas regarding institutional reform (Appendix 3).

The Procedure Registering Cases

Figure 1: Existing Case-flow process for criminal cases (Pakistan's Criminal Procedure Code of 1898)



Source: Created by the author according to Pakistan's Criminal Procedure Code of 1898

³⁸ Including War Against Rape (WAR), the Aurat Foundation, Dastak Organization, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. The SRU unit also interviewed women rights activists, lawyers such as Hina Jilani, the late Asma Jehangir, and civil society organizations of the Dastak and Aurat Foundations to analyze the actual case-flow process.

Figure 1 sets out the case-flow process for cognizable offenses.³⁹ First, the victim reports the crime by lodging a First Information Report (FIR) at the police station.⁴⁰ This is followed by a medical examination and the collection of forensic evidence.⁴¹ The medical examination informs the Medico-legal certificate (MLC). This document is the precondition for proving the occurrence of a sexual assault. The MLC is necessary for the investigation process to proceed and a VAW case not supported by an MLC is dismissed in a court of law. In practice, a FIR may be registered after an MLC has been issued to determine the extent of the nature of offences and the injuries they produced.

The interviews revealed that the victim reporting the crime was first required to undergo the medical examination procedure, and it was only subsequent to the issuance of the MLC that the police were willing to register a police case, as shown from the case-flow process highlighted in red.

The Impediments to Registering Cases

A major issue reported was that the registration of the FIR takes place at the discretion of the police officials. After the FIR registration, the victim has to undergo a medical examination and ensure that forensics testing is undertaken. This will then allow them allow access to the prosecutor and to the court.

The victims consistently reported that the police did not display any sympathy or concern regarding the trauma suffered by the victims. They said the officers regarded their complaints as routine and domestic violence as standard behavior rather than a serious crime. This finding corroborates the view that in societies with strong norm-based behavioral rules, individuals are directed to abide by their obligation to follow these edicts (Fennell, 2009). The potency of these rules derives from their ability to control individuals' behavior (Sen, 1997) by specifying that the failure to do so would result in inflaming feelings of vengeance and retribution. The obligation to adhere to social norms is also reinforced by the threat of sanctions or social disapproval (Dequech, 2009). Enforcement can take the form of physical violence or acts of VAW as a means of upholding patriarchal and feudal control of women in traditional areas. Even though adherence to such social norms may not always lead to beneficial outcomes, individuals invariably feel compelled to follow them (Akerlof, 1980).

The low level of social recognition of VAW as a serious crime is a consequence of a widespread social belief structure that works against the reporting of cases and the subsequent quest for legal redress. The lack of institutional responsibility evident among all of the concerned departments is a consequence of the gendered social norms where police officers do not readily agree to register and investigate a violent crime against women and provide justice to the victims. This lack of objectivity and biased lens has resulted in a fragmented case-flow process, delaying evidence collection, and allowing for the tampering of evidence, all of which diminish the sanctity of the evidence in the eyes of the court.

The investigation of the case-flow revealed that forensic scientists were faced with medical evidence rendered "unacceptable" due to delays in the medical examination stage. In the procedure for the prosecution of VAW crimes, a medical examination needs to be conducted preferably

³⁹ Offenses such as rape.

⁴⁰ As mandated by the Criminal Procedure Code, the FIR is the first primary course of action that is a prerequisite for launching an investigation for any crime.

⁴¹ As both of these stages are required for the case-flow to get to the stage where the case goes to court through the actions of the public prosecutor.

within 24 hours of assault but before a maximum of 72 hours.⁴² The data revealed that out of a total of 9,808 cases received at the Punjab Forensic Science Agency in 2013-14, the DNA evidence did not match 84% of the cases.⁴³ This is attributed by forensic scientists to delays in medical examinations, often conducted 24 hours after the crime and contamination of clothing worn by the victim at the time of assault during that period.⁴⁴ The delays also result in a breakdown in the flow of evidence, for example the vaginal swabs and cheek swabs in some cases did not match.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the evidence received at Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA) was collated inefficiently. The SRU found inaccurate collection of data, primarily due to a lack of proper training of police officials in how to collect and preserve evidence that pertains specifically to VAW crimes.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the testing of evidence can only be undertaken at the main Lahore PFSA center and samples from across the province are brought to this center for testing purposes. This creates a critical time lag between evidence collection and processing.⁴⁷ A medical examination also can only be conducted in government medical facilities.⁴⁸ There exists an extreme shortage of women medical officers,⁴⁹ with the consequence that victims of VAW incidents are not able to have a medical examination due to the either absence of women officers at the government medical facilities or too few women officers resulting in patient caseload. The very limited availability of women medical officers leads to inordinate delays in conducting medical examinations and an increase in the cases with evidence regarded as “inadmissible”.

The victims reported a lack of VAW-sensitive medical staff appointed to government hospitals. Furthermore, there is a lack of financial incentives for medical examining staff as the government has a fixed rate of PKR 200 per medical examination, out of which medical examiners only receive a percentage.

Further challenges exist at the prosecution stage. Information collected by the investigation undertaken by the SRU indicated that approximately 50% of the 3,6349 reported cases of crimes against women were “challaned”⁵⁰ and only half the cases reported by women actually went to court.⁵¹ This is because lack of proper investigation and evidence collection, familial pressures, societal norms, and police behavior—all identified as the major reasons for the acute reluctance to formalize the reports by VAW victims into an FIR and to move the case-flow forward for medical examination, and even to report a VAW crime in the first place. Police officers and family members appear to be enforcing social norms to ensure that women do not oppose patriarchal rules. The social norms are observed by coercing women to accept a socially recognized form of

⁴² Interview with Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014

⁴³ Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA), 2014

⁴⁴ Interview with Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014

⁴⁵ Interview with Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014; Interview with Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014

⁴⁶ Interview with Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014; Interview with Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014

⁴⁷ Interview with Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014; Interview with Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department, PFSA, 2014. Although, PFSA is now in the process of establishing satellite facilities in other districts, but they are only collection facilities as yet and evidence testing takes place in Lahore’s main facility.

⁴⁸ Including Rural Health Centers, Tehsil Headquarter hospitals and District Headquarter hospitals.

⁴⁹ Interview with Dr. Waseem, Punjab Medico-Legal Surgeon, Primary and Secondary Health Department, Punjab, 2014

⁵⁰ “Challaned” means a police report was prepared under PPC after investigation and submitted to the prosecutors/court.

⁵¹ Punjab Public Prosecution Department 2014; Punjab Police 2013-2014

agreement; this occurs through the signing of a “Raazi Naama,” a reconciliation pact between the victims and the perpetrators. These pressures can be particularly persuasive in situations where victims are obstructed from registering a FIR and where the medical examination procedure is subject to long delays resulting in very poor evidence. The social norm of the “Raazi Naama” is also readily resorted to as VAW cases are not regarded as crimes, but as an easy opportunity for seeking remedies for on-going family and local rivalries and feuds.

These procedural barriers to equitable justice are compounded by human resource constraints. A shortage of public prosecutors, results in overwhelming case-loads whilst the lack of specialist prosecutor training regarding gender-sensitive procedures leads to failings in the protection of the victim from social pressures to withdraw testimony. Prosecutors also remain susceptible to the prevalent social norms. This also encourages acquiescence (or even collusion) with the views of the accused, husband, or other male family or community members, rather than pursuit of justice for the female VAW victim.⁵²

The Challenges for the Police

A similar pattern is found in police procedures and individual officers’ behavior. The SRU’s stakeholder analysis of Punjab police officers highlighted numerous procedural shortcomings in the recording and processing of cases of violence.⁵³ A pervasive lack of empathy evident amongst both male and female police officials encouraged significant delays or even outright refusal to lodge a FIR at all. Officers appeared to be more likely to regard VAW victims as subordinate members of the family and community and emphasize that violence should remain within the private sphere.⁵⁴ There was a widespread attitude that VAW victims must have violated gendered social norms prior to the alleged offence. As such, police officers regarded subsequent violent acts against female victims perpetuated by males in the family or community as justified forms of punishment.⁵⁵

An Innovative Institutional Reform of the VAW laws

The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act (PPWVA) of 2016 is the very first legislation in Pakistan to have devised its own purpose-specific implementation mechanism (Nabeel, Qamar and Malik, 2016) for providing a safe and supportive space for women. These spaces are the Violence Against Women Centres (VAWCs) and their objective is to create an institutional process that will be able to assist women in both registering their cases and ensuring prosecution. The VAWCs have been introduced in a phased manner with the pilot VAWC being established at Multan in March 2017.⁵⁶

⁵² Interview with DSP Legal, Lahore Police, 2014

⁵³ Interview with DSP Legal, Lahore Police, 2014; Interview with SSP (Rtd) Farkhanda, 2014; Interview with CCPO Lahore, Punjab Police, 2014; Interview with DIG Investigation Lahore, Punjab Police, 2014.

⁵⁴ Interview with SSP (Rtd.) Farkhanda, 2014

⁵⁵ The victim focus groups also revealed that women’s help desks provided at police stations were not effective in registering cases. This might be because the authority remains a man’s prerogative and the women police officials remain subordinate to them.

⁵⁶ The Act of 2016 is path breaking, under the category of VAW from domestic violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, economic abuse, stalking to cybercrime. Furthermore, it includes the importance of civil remedies that can be awarded to victims as additional forms of justice to those of the existing remedies for criminal action. These forms include Protection Orders, Monetary Orders, and Residence Orders. This allows victims to

The establishment of a VAWC in Multan provides a round-the-clock, female-run facility that aims to streamline the investigation-prosecution case-flow process by bringing all *previously disconnected* justice delivery services under one roof. These include first aid care, police reporting, investigation, prosecution, provision of legal aid, medical examination and treatment, collection of forensic and other evidence, psychological evaluation, counseling, and post-trauma rehabilitation. The VAWCs provide these “all-under-one-roof facilities” to close the gap between the number of incidents reported and the low conviction rate for VAW crimes. This is done by replacing the disconnected and delayed evidence collection by housing all legal steps, the reporting, and evidence collection in the same center.

The VAWCs have staff comprised of fully trained women police⁵⁷ and medical staff to ensure a safe and supportive environment and counselling services to the victims to assist in their rehabilitation. The VAWC at Multan has an all-female staff of 65⁵⁸ to ensure speedy justice delivery. The VAWCs have been provided with special software designed to have real-time data integration with audio-visual recording being made available in all departments. A toll-free helpline and ambulances are in place to rescue the victims if required. The provision of a universal toll-free dial-in number to facilitate complaints without the need to make their way to the VAWC provides women with ease of access to this service.

The VAWCs have mediation centers to hold counseling sessions to address non-serious offenses (with the consent of the victim). By incorporating a mediation center operated by qualified counselors and psychologists within the VAWC building, the VAWC model ensures that families are given a real chance at reconciliation. In case families fail to reconcile and women victims of violence have to be moved to Shelter Homes, their children (if any) can accompany them so as to not completely disrupt their family lives. Furthermore, these centres are integrated with Shelter Homes where victims will be housed post-reporting of VAW offences. The goal is to instill independence in the survivors of violence by working with women’s organisations to deliver empowerment programmes. The results have been promising, with some 1,200 victims⁵⁹ having visited the VAWC in the first 6 months of its operation to use the “all-under-one-roof” facility provided to improve access to justice.⁶⁰

The Act makes maximal use of state-of-the-art tracking techniques, with judicial protective orders that require defendants to wear GPS ankle- and wrist-trackers for the duration of the prosecution process. There are ethical concerns about the adverse consequences of designing a deterrent tracking device that might result in either vigilante action or might even result in offenders regarding this as a badge of honour. While the SRU’s initial focus was to streamline the criminal justice processes, strengthen prosecution of VAW crimes to have a deterrent effect and

initiate simultaneous proceedings for civil and criminal remedies and provides the basis for a more secure environment within which a victim can create a safe space out of the reach of an aggressor. An additional feature of the Act that has particular importance is that it recognizes the tendency of families and communities to use cases of violence as an opportunity for remedies for prior feuds rather than according to the victim with rights to access justice, by introducing explicit penalties for registering false complaints.

⁵⁷ In the center, the provincial police and medical staff have to undergo gender-sensitivity training.

⁵⁸ Excluding male staff comprising of software/CCTV engineers, lab technicians/radiographers, and security guards.

⁵⁹ Number of victims which VAWC has provided assistance to from 25 March – 25 September 2017.

⁶⁰ For details on the number and nature of VAW cases received, please contact the co-authors, Hafsa Lak and Salman Sufi at strategicreformsdev@gmail.com

establish rehabilitation services to ensure survivors of VAW are provided with the means and skills to re-integrate into society, it is still not clear whether this device will have the intended effect.⁶¹

The design and delivery of training programmes, with the support of women's organisations, will provide an environment where the emphasis is on the transgression by the violator, rather putting the onus on women. Shifting the disapproval to the violator is an innovative shift in emphasis, particularly through the use of a tracking device to monitor the offender. The fundamental shift that moves the locus of investigation to raising objections to the behaviour of perpetrators and away from acquiescing to dominant patriarchal social norms that say it is acceptable to inflict violence on women to punish them for unseemly behaviour is the beginning of the process of denying the acceptability of abuse. This shift that does not condone abuse and that directly addresses the evidence of inflicting violence could provide an important avenue by which policy-based interventions, which begin to query, record, and undertake legal procedures, begin to nudge social norms and push for reducing gender inequality in difficult community environments.

Domestic violence legislation in Pakistan has previously been focused on maintaining the status of men and has given little to no acknowledgement to the need to protect the physical and emotional integrity of women, nor does it have any recognition of the "intrinsic" value of the autonomy of women in society (Nicolson, 2000:5). The Act challenges social norms as it has focused on confronting the private sphere, where the state has traditionally been reluctant to legislate against the violence perpetrated by men. Furthermore, the law also works to focus attention on the need to raise questions regarding forms of patriarchy, such as inheritance laws that further mitigate gender inequality by placing all control and management of inheritance in the hands of men. The shift to prioritizing the promulgation of laws in female-dominated spheres of life, such as the home, works to counter the male-dominated emphasis in law-making by making domestic violence a sphere where women take the lead in reporting, monitoring, and adjudicating.

Discussion and Conclusion

Pakistan is the first country to launch such a comprehensive institutional reform that is based on the bringing together of two important components: providing "all-under-one-roof" facilities operated by all-women staff members, the use of technology to track an assailant with a GPS tracking device to reduce the potential for intimidation of the victim by the assailant (or repeat attacks on the victim while the case is in process). Such an innovative institutional reform could be adapted for use in other countries to comprehensively reduce VAW cases and to increase the success in prosecution and sentencing of perpetrators of such crimes.

The new Act and the establishment of VAWCs aim not only to provide protective services to survivors of violence, but also to increase the conviction rate, with regard to VAW crimes and thus, serve as an effective form of deterrence against gendered violence in society. By providing all services in one, centralized location, all of which are integrated with specially designed software, VAWCs are changing the face of criminal justice in Pakistan.⁶²

Given a social context where there is a very low level of social recognition of VAW as a serious crime, the Act works to provide incentives to improve the reporting of cases and the

⁶¹ SRU is currently in the process of setting up the Women Protection Authority and is also working on ensuring public education regarding the Act by introducing details in the educational curriculum at the secondary school level.

⁶² The reform can be replicated in all police stations to streamline processes there and provide solutions to issues similar to those identified earlier, which result in a justice delivery gap.

subsequent quest for a deterrent via legal redress through the pursuit of the prosecution. The emphasis on changing social norms by reducing the acceptability of familial and community forms of punishment in the eyes of the law is an important shift in institutional reforms. This works as a method by incentivizing women to report acts of gendered violence and also reduces the social sanctions against women's agency by improving the procedures for reporting and legal redress. The added value of the reform orchestrated by the SRU is its ability to simultaneously change the legal rules as well as the social norms by bringing together legal norms that are enforced through the operation of formal institutions and social norms that are enforced by members of the general community (Elster, 1989).

In the case of Pakistan, it is not possible to change individual behavior in communities strongly influenced by gendered social norms by only focusing on legal reforms, in a social context of ongoing family feuds and where the act of domestic violence is not in itself regarded as a serious offence. The initiative not only provides safe and supportive environments for women victims, but also increases the public visibility of the assailant by enforcing the requirement of wearing a tracking device. These public forms of changing the acceptability of violence against women can provide the trigger for men to choose not to behave violently towards women, as it increases the public opprobrium associated with this type of behavior (Dequech, 2013).

The Act also points to new ways of thinking about how to improve women's access to avenues of justice. The provision of strategies to address VAWCs is crucial for improving a more gender-oriented set of legal procedures. It recognizes that women require the legal system to protect and develop their rights through the creation of a safe and supportive environment. Accordingly, the Act has advocated for and put into place an integration of legal and institutional reforms with legal empowerment, a process of systemic change through which the use of the law and legal systems improves or transforms individuals' social, political, or economic situations. This process not only improves access to justice, but it also holds the powerful to account and contests unjust power relations (Domingo and O'Neil, 2014). A legal system that is inaccessible to or biased against women leaves them vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and discrimination and thus impedes their development and access to other social rights (Domingo and O'Neil, 2014). The inability of women to resist abuse is the starting point for this research project, and it is for this reason that it begins with addressing the situation where deeply entrenched legal structural obstacles and discriminatory gender norms prevent women from accessing justice. This is a consequence of national and local institutions for the administration of justice being permeated by these same obstacles and norms (OHRH, 2015). Our focus is on exploring procedures for removing all obstacles that victims face in accessing justice. The project not only works towards increasing safety for women fleeing violent homes and ensuring them access to justice, but also works towards the prevention of domestic violence rather than only pursuing punishment (UN, 2009:27). It uses the case of the reforms of the SRU, which include the introduction of an innovative training programme for women police officers and the provision of legal redress under a single roof, to evaluate whether the creation of such spaces could encourage abused women to regard these sites as being less patriarchal. This thinking follows the argument that there is need to increase women's agency by using locations of collective engagement, where it is possible to create symbolic changes that can contest gendered social norms (Pearce and Connell, 2015).

This innovative policy approach has the potential to create such collective engagements in VAWCs, and if this can be realized it would be a valuable design that could be replicated in other regions of the country. The future success of VAWCs would then be an innovation that could provide a set of local and national institution-building processes that can contribute to the

achievement of international agendas such as CEDAW and also has potential implications for ensuring gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The process of setting up the institution of VAWCs could also be the beginning of a national discourse on changed gendered power relations in the community. This is an important consideration, as it moves away from a singular focus on an individualized notion of gender identity to addressing the important role of social norms in creating and maintaining gendered power. There could be future implications of this innovative approach for more effective procedures for dealing with violence against women in other national contexts.

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Appendix 1: Salient Features of Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016

The legislation was unanimously passed by the Punjab Legislative Assembly on 24th February 2016, and has been implemented in Multan district with the operationalization of the pilot VAWC on 25th March 2017. As per the Act, all wrongs committed against women have been made an offence, including abetment of an offence, domestic violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, economic abuse, stalking, and cybercrime. It also provides civil remedies to victims (or aggrieved persons) in addition to the already existing criminal ones.

The aggrieved person under this Act is a female of any age, whereas the aggressor can be a male or a female. The Act also contains penalties for people registering false complaints. The Act also institutes District Women Protection Committees comprised of government officials and civil society members. These Committees will supervise the operation of VAWCs and Shelter Homes associated with VAWCs. The Committee will also oversee the mediation processes taking place at VAWCs between the aggrieved and her family. They will also ensure that all cases of violence against women registered in any police station of the district are referred to the VAWC for investigation, medical examination, and the collection of forensic evidence. One of the members of each District Women Protection Committees will be the District Women Protection Officer (DWPO), who will have the power to forcefully enter any place to rescue the aggrieved person with her consent and bring her to the VAWC for investigation and rehabilitation. The DWPO can also direct the perpetrator to immediately move out of the house for a period not exceeding 48 hours in order to protect the life, dignity, or reputation of the aggrieved person.

The civil remedies under the Act include Protection Orders, Monetary Orders, and Residence Orders. Thus, the aggrieved can initiate parallel criminal proceedings for VAW offences already covered in the Pakistan Penal Code and other existing laws if she wants to. Under a Protection Order, the perpetrator shall not be allowed to communicate with the aggrieved or may be directed to stay a distance away from the aggrieved as determined by the court. These orders will be enforced through GPS-tracked electronic ankle/wrist bracelets. A Residence Order, on the other hand, will ensure that the aggrieved is not evicted from the house and that she may be moved to a shelter home or an alternate accommodation according to her wishes. In addition, with Monetary Orders, the aggrieved will be compensated for any monetary loss occurred, whether due to medical treatment expenses, prosecution fees, or other things.

Significance of provision of civil remedies

The burden of proof for criminal offences is much higher than civil offences. The civil remedies, therefore, render proving offences such as psychological abuse relatively easy.

The victim is not guaranteed protection and other services in case of criminalizing an offence and giving punishment to the perpetrator. The PPWVA, in addition to laying down penalties for defendants, also provides rights and remedies to victims in the form of protection, residence, and monetary orders, and other protective services.

Although provisions to punish acts of domestic violence and other VAW crimes exist in the Pakistan Penal Code, the issue lies in the implementation of those sections which PPWAV Act addresses via Violence Against Women Centres. In addition, acts of domestic violence are already an offence under various sections of PPC, and punishments for them

have been also been prescribed in this federal law, too, which prevails over all similar provincial legislations.

Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

More than 45 officials from different government departments of Punjab were interviewed in the designing phase of the reforms. These included:

Police Department:

1. Late Home Minister, Col. Shuja Khanzada
2. Secretary Home Department, 2015 & 2016
3. Additional Secretary, Home Department, 2015 & 2016
4. CCPO Lahore, Capt. Ameen Wain
5. DIG Investigations (Punjab), 2015
6. DIG Operations (Lahore), Dr. Haider Ashraf
7. IG Punjab (Rtd. 2017), Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhaera
8. SSP (Rtd) Farkhanda Mohsin

Prosecution:

9. Rana Maqbool, former Prosecution Secretary and former IG of Sindh – Currently Adviser to Chief Minister
10. Prosecution Secretary, 2015
11. Prosecutor General Punjab, 2015
12. DSP Legal, Punjab Police, 2015
13. Aqeel Khan, Director PPD, Prosecution Department 2015

Forensics:

14. Dr. Tahir, DG Forensics
15. Noor Fatima, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department
16. Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Forensic Scientist, DNA and Serology Department

Medical Examination:

17. Punjab Medico Legal Surgeon, Dr. Waseem Haider
18. Gynecologists and lady doctors at Jinnah Hospital and Services Hospital Lahore
19. Doctors at Tehsil Headquarters Hospitals in Sargodha, Sheikhpura, Lahore, Chakwal

Law:

20. Secretary, Law Department, 2015
21. Director Law, Mohsin Abbas, Law Department, 2015
22. Mohsin Bokhari, Deputy Director, Law Department, 2015
23. Legal Officers at Social Welfare Department and Women Development Department

Members of Punjab Provincial Assembly (Legislature):

24. Ms. Farhana Afzal
25. Ms. Ayesha Javed
26. Ms. Joyce Julius
27. Ms. Aliya Aftab
28. Ms. Kiran Dar
29. Ms. Tamkeen Niazi

30. Ms. Mary Gill
31. Ms. Zakia Shahnawaz, Punjab Population Minister
32. Ms. Hameeda Wahiddudin, Punjab Women Development Minister
33. Ms. Rashida Yaqub, Parliamentary Secretary of Women Development in 2015

Appendix 3

1. Head, Lahore Crisis Centre
2. Head, Multan Crisis Centre
3. Head, Rawalpindi Crisis Centre
4. Head, Lahore Shelter Home
5. Secretary Women Development Department
6. Chairman, Punjab Commission on the Status of Women
7. Secretary Social Welfare Department, 2015, 2016 & 2017
8. Mr. Muhammad Suleman, Director, Social Welfare Department, Government of Punjab

Appendix 4: VAWC's streamlined case-flow process via specially-designed software

