



# FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

**Portrayal of violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV Dramas**

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## Table of Content

Abstract	2
Introduction	2
Significance of Study	3
Study of Aim	3
Research Question	4
Literature Review	4
Theoretical Review	6
Method Section: Research design	7
Timeline and Budget	8
Ethics	8
Operational Definition	8
Sampling Design	9
Data Collection	9
Data Analysis	9
Discussion	24
Implication	25
Recommendation	25
Limitation	26
Conclusion	26
References	27

### **Abstract**

This study focuses on how violence against women is being portrayed in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. By using qualitative content analysis the study examines the frequency, types, and significance of violence against women in two well-known Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. One of them is “Muqaddar” from GEO Entertainment while the other is “Kaise teri Khudgharzi” from ARY Digital. Actions were analyzed and labeled as domestic violence included humiliation, manipulation, blaming, threatening, terrorizing, slapping on the face, and hurting emotionally. Data was analyzed by using the qualitative content analysis method which included specifying analytical units and categories, creating a set of code guidelines, using the rules to code the text, examining the findings, and developing conclusions. The study explores whether there is a need for sensitivity and responsibility in portraying women in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. The outcomes of this study assist in comprehending the portrayal of violence against women in Pakistani Urdu dramas and its possible impact on audiences.

**Keywords:** Verbal violence, Physical violence, Violence against women, Dramas and Pakistan.

## Introduction

The mainstream media plays a key role in educating the public, increasing awareness, and serving as a strong communication tool for activists and campaigners. This function may be extended to the issue of violence against women (Baluta, 2015). In today's culture, the media has a significant impact on how individuals conduct their daily lives. It gives them access to entertainment and information. Nonetheless, depending on the type of media a person consumes, the presence of media may negatively affect how people form ideas and perceive reality (Hu & Zhu, 2017). The variety of dramas involves violence against women which exposes the dark side of society. Dramas quietly convey their points of view to their audiences in a variety of ways, people may be positively or badly affected, depending entirely on the content. Pakistan is currently ranked as the sixth most unsafe country for women in the world because of an increase in violence against women (Awais et al., 2021).

Dramas nowadays have different effects on the lives of viewers. They may influence viewers' attitudes about violence, crime, and other social activities. A lot of violence in dramas might damage our society since people learn various behaviors from TV. Those who witness any form of violence in dramas are more likely to engage in violent action. Audience behavior can be affected directly or indirectly by media content, which individuals learn from dramas (Faiz et al., 2020).

According to Ali and Khan (2012), the Pakistani drama serials portray female characters as weak, unprivileged, dependent, and incapable of basic human rights. Violence against women is frequently shown in Pakistani television dramas (Ahmed, 2014). Women in Pakistani drama serials are frequently portrayed as submissive, a burden on the family, physically and emotionally weak. This theme in Pakistani dramas promotes perceptions of a male-dominated society (Asif, 2010). It's essential to understand how violence against women is portrayed as a common theme in Pakistani

dramas. There is strong evidence that the form of images shown in media may impact the behavior and attitudes of its audience (Awais et al., 2021). It has been shown that Pakistani dramas promote violence and anti-social tendencies in society. The female is frequently the victim of an uneven power relation between man and woman. The media may be both a helpful factor in social transformation and a negative source of cultural invasion (Jamal et al., 2018). Through this study, I will analyze how the electronic media portrays violence against women in Pakistani dramas (Faiz et al., 2020).

### **Significance of Study**

The significance of this study is that the public will be aware of the fact that Pakistani TV dramas are constantly showing women as victim of violence. Domestic violence is predicted under patriarchal influence which is wrong. Also, it means that voices can be raised against such TV dramas which are normalizing violence and mentally misleading people in the society.

### **Study of Aim**

The objective is to study from various perspectives, how family and community politics affect women who want to do something for herself which typically end with hetero-patriarchal norms (Asghar et al., 2020). Further, this study focuses on women's efforts against Domestic violence (DV) which is being portrayed in dramas as physical and verbal abuse (Awais et al., 2021).

- To learn how women's violence is represented in Pakistani TV dramas.
- To evaluate if violent incidents against women are portrayed in Pakistani TV drama series as a common phenomenon or as an act of violence.
- To analyze the types of violent scenes portrayed in Pakistani drama serials

**Research Question**

How are verbal and physical violence against women being portrayed in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas?

## Literature Review

In Pakistan, domestic violence is a major problem and it has been portrayed in various forms in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. This literature review explores violence against women and how it is typically portrayed in TV dramas. In this regard, Johnston (2010) investigating the role of women in film and television over the years, focuses on the representation of women in public relations, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, as professional women.

Discusses the feminist and post-feminist perspectives of and examines changing social trends regarding women working in the public relations bubble, and violence against women in television and films. A study “Gender Violence on Television: Insights and Implications from Female Audiences of Drama Series” demonstrates that violence against women is depicted in various genres in TV dramas and other programs (Clark, 2021). This violence includes depictions of sexual, verbal, psychological, domestic violence, harassment, rape. In exactly the same way, (Coyne et al., 2011) revealed that gender violence representations on television aren't limited to physical violence; they may also encompass verbal and psychological abuse, as well as relationship hatred.

Scholars have analyzed the representation of violence against women in Turkish dramas and its effects on the viewers. In a study by Gülüm and Akca (2020), the effects of exposure to violence against women in Turkish dramas on viewers were investigated. The study found that exposure to violence against women in Turkish dramas was associated with a higher level of acceptance of violence against women in real life. The study suggested that the normalization of violence against women in Turkish dramas can desensitize viewers to the issue, leading to a higher level of acceptance of violence against women. In the same way, Kaya and Ozdemir (2020) study focuses on the portrayal of brutality in Turkish plays. Turkish dramas portray various types of violence, which is appreciated. Individuals of all classes watch violence on public television, which increases the phenomenon's popularity among viewers. In light of these dramas, violence has

become more popular among people, and the trend of violent thinking among individuals is growing, as are the instances of gender-based violence.

The number of television scenes featuring acts of aggression against women as central scenes has dramatically increased over the past 40 years. (Jamieson, & Romer, 2014). It's almost impossible to avoid violence in contemporary movies and TV shows; what was once a rare storyline on television is now a common one. As Franiuk & Scherr (2013) uses the term "hidden violence" to describe violence that takes place in secret. Examples of these cases of gender violence include direct protecting and stalker behaviors, enviousness, and excessive jealousy— all of which are early indicators of domestic violence—in the teen drama *The Vampire Diaries* (2009).

Television content has a profound impact on its audience, and the narratives shown in TV drama may transform the viewer's image of the world. The audience then attempt to use these in their real-world situations, which may drastically change their life patterns (Abbas,2020). Zaheer (2020) demonstrated in his research that women are portrayed in popular entertainment media on Pakistani television networks, mostly in drama serials. The media has the ability to promote patriarchal and ideological viewpoints, and it has frequently been a target of feminist criticism. Roy (2016) describes feminism in general as a political, cultural, intellectual, and theoretical response to hetero-patriarchy which undermines women's lives, struggles, interests, rights, and bodies. As Rivadeneyra and Ward (2005) highlights that television content revolves around gender role depictions since studies have found that television portrays men and women as completely different. Male characters are frequently portrayed as the most intellectual and ascending. Females usually act as subordinates to male leadership, and are frequently portrayed as dependent, passionate, and emotional. Most media scholars focus on how women are portrayed in dramas, regarding the factors and beliefs that contribute to the exploitation or discrimination of women. Women's roles that differ from societal expectations and family values are an example. They are often shown feeling the wrath of their fathers, siblings or husbands. Similarly, women who leave the safety of their homes without justification are sexually or otherwise abused by male predators



(Khan, 2020). Evidence suggests that males are more frequently shown in positions of power on early evening television than females. (Lauzen & Deiss, 2009; Signorielli 1999). As a result, the two genders are unable to maintain a balance between their social and personal life, where the woman may be unable to perform all of her tasks according to prescribed gender roles such as housework, etc. (Work Life, 2020). People have excessive expectations about marriages because the media portrays an idealised version of marriage. (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Women working as unpaid domestic laborers play a great number of female characters in all Pakistani drama serials. (Fatima, 2019). They are typically represented as moms, partners, daughters, sisters, and daughters-in-law who stay at home and care for the houses, children, and other family members. It is especially damaging for women who are forced to endure abusive or divorced marriages and are left without any sources of assistance by Pakistani society's obsession on a woman's marital status. (Hussain & Bittles, 1999).

A study was conducted by Juni, Kareem, Alam, Haider, & Ashraf (2014) about the impact of Pakistan television dramas. The study also suggested that the dialogue, plot, soundtrack, violence, romance, and humour included in PTV dramas have an impact on individuals. Additionally, the research demonstrates how these tragedies affected people's words, eating habits, gaming preferences, and social interactions. Shah & Bhatti (2013) studied societal taboos in Hum TV's prime-time dramas. According to the survey, Hum TV airs socially unacceptable content in its prime-time programmes. The researcher also kept an eye on how frequently various social taboos appeared in these dramas.

Aggression may result from watching violent television Karim L. N (2008) studied the various types of violence against women were common in Prime Time PTV drama serials during the fourth quarter of 2005. The study investigated how negative beliefs about violence against women were instilled in the audience through entertainment. According to the study's findings, there is a significant involvement in violent behaviour among those with higher SES and more exposure to PTV dramas than there is between television reality and social reality. The survey also

showed that, when it comes to gender, married males with middle-class backgrounds who are well-educated and who work in cities are often judged to be more aggressive than young, educated working women. The research further disclosed that the violence portrayed in PTV Urdu prime time dramas might be classified as verbal, physical, psychological, or symbolic.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The portrayal of violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas is a complex and diverse subject that may be studied through the perspective of numerous ideas. A significant theory is the Social learning theory, which proposes that media exposure and observation can affect people's views of reality and influence their attitudes and behaviors.

Social learning theory is a psychological theory that suggests that people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and values through observation, modeling, and reinforcement. According to this theory, individuals can acquire new behaviors by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of those behaviors. Social learning theory emphasizes the role of both cognitive and environmental factors in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Verbal and physical assault against married women is frequently presented as widespread and accepted practice in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. By normalizing and portraying gender-based violence as a natural part of married life, these portrayals may legitimize and increase it. Viewers

may internalize these depictions and come to accept violence against women as a regular part of their own lives through the process of observational learning. Exposure to media violence has been proven in studies to enhance the chance of aggressive behavior in individuals (Anderson et al., 2003). It is essential to emphasize that the depiction of violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas does not always reflect an intentional choice on the part of the producers or creators. Instead, it might be an expression of broader societal attitudes and expectations regarding gender roles and relationships. However, TV dramas can contribute to a sequence of violence by promoting these views and practices on screen and by reinforcing negative attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, this social learning theory is helpful for studying violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas and its effects on viewers.

## Method Section: Research Design

Qualitative research is gathering and evaluating non-numerical data (such as text, videos, or audio) in order to better understand concepts, views, or events. It can be conducted obtain in- depth views into an issue or to develops new research ideas (Bhandari, 2023). The following five steps are common to different kinds of qualitative data:

- Prepare and arrange your information. This might include interview transcription or making up findings.
- Examine and analyze your data for connections and frequent topics.
- Data should be coded. In qualitative research survey, for example, this may involve reading over each participant's replies and marking them with codes in a table. You may develop additional codes to add to your platform as you browse through your data.
- Find repeating topics. Connect codes to form logical, key themes.

Content analysis is a research technique that identifies patterns in recorded speech. To execute content analysis, you gather data methodically from a variety of texts, which might be textual, vocal, or graphical.

- Books, magazines, and journals
- Conferences and interviews
- Website material and social media postings

Content analysis can be quantitative (based on collecting and analyzing) or qualitative (based on interpreting and understanding). In both forms, you describe or "code" phrases, concepts, and topics within the literature and then evaluate the findings (Luo, 2022).

## 5 steps of content analysis

- Choose the content to be analyzed.
- Specify the analytical units and categories.
- Create a set of code guidelines.
- Use the rules to code the text.
- Examine the findings and develop conclusions

A qualitative content analysis is a research method for analyzing qualitative data by classifying and evaluating the content of text, audio, or visual elements. It includes evaluating data in an inductive and deductive manner, permitting for the identification of novel themes while both being led by established concepts. Therefore, qualitative content analysis is a useful approach for studying qualitative data and gaining insights into complicated phenomena.

### **Timeline**

The data collection was begin on 20th July 2023 and completed in August 2023. Further analysis was done in October 2023. Overall, Thesis was completed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### **Budget**

Budget was around 3000 which was involved printing the research paper into hardcopy.

### **Ethics**

The Study's findings were reported accurately and honestly. The research was conducted with transparency and integrity.

### **Operational definition**

**Verbal violence:** Verbal violence may be classified as hate speech.

**Physical violence:** Physical violence includes beating, burning, kicking, punching and killing.

### **Sampling Design**

The content was chosen depending on the popularity and ratings of the dramas. The most popular dramas among Pakistani audiences were chosen by using a purposive sample approach.

### **Data Collection**

I selected two Pakistani TV dramas from 2 different channels. First drama that I took “Muqaddar” from GEO Entertainment channel with time slot: Monday at 8pm to 9pm. It is popular among audience as it has IMDb rating 8.3/10. It has total 38 episodes; each episode is of 40 minutes. I analyzed overall episodes. Second drama was “Kaise teri khudgharzi” from Ary digital with time Slot: Wednesday at 8pm to 9pm. Its popularity can be seen through IMDb rating which is 8.1/10. It has total 30 episodes; each episode is of 40 minutes, and I will analyzed all episodes.

## Data Analysis

Actions that were analyzed and labeled as domestic violence may include humiliation, manipulation, blaming, threatening, terrorize, slapping on face and hurting emotionally. In analysis, perpetrators were men and victims were women. The characteristics of abuser contained toxic masculinity, dominancy, violence, emotionless and power while on the other hand, women characteristics were showed as helpless, weak and sensitive. Different types of domestic violence that analyzed in both dramas were physical and verbal abuse. Violence may be analyzed independently to have a better knowledge of how they are portrayed violence in TV shows.

Data analysis involved around picking a sample of TV dramas and analyzed chosen episodes within the sample. As a result, a random selection of episodes from a variety of TV dramas were analyzed to present a broad picture of how domestic violence is portrayed in two TV dramas.

Data was gathered by recording chosen TV programs and transcribing sequences portraying domestic abuse. The following actions were taken to conduct the analysis:

- 1) **Familiarization:** In order to get connected with the data, I watched the selected TV programmes and read the transcripts many times.
- 2) **Coding:** I detected and categorized domestic violence episodes in TV programmes. There were two stages of coding: open coding and selective coding.
- 3) **Categorization:** I classified domestic violence episodes according to the kind of violence, the gender of both the aggressor and the victim, the setting of the violence, and the effects of the violence.
- 4) **Interpretation:** I interpreted the findings by analyzing the general themes and trends that emerge from the data. These interpretations concentrated on the portrayal of domestic

violence in TV dramas, its influence on viewers, and the societal and cultural context in which it happens.

### **Theme. 1**

#### **Anger, violence and its normalization: Manifesting power imbalance and hyper-masculinity**

Man sobbing and yelling at the girl in a drama represents a traditional concept of masculinity that is closely linked with anger. Men are supposed have physical strength and control their emotions. When males do express their feelings, it is perceived as a sign of weakness and that he must strike out in order to feel like a man. In one scene, she is unable to ask her crying father for help since she is being forced and terrorized by the man. The scenario also demonstrates how the male uses his rage to frighten and dominate the girl by blaming her for leaving him. This pattern is frequently observed in situations of domestic violence.

**“I will not let you meet, let them cry. I’ll not let you meet“**

It is shown that males own and govern women. They think they have the authority to tell women what they can and cannot do and to punish them if they disobey. In drama, he considers her leaving without his permission as a threat to his power. He has the willingness to use violence to maintain control over her life because he thinks he has the right to do so. This kind of toxic masculinity has strong misogynistic roots.

**“Why did you say no, when I called you? You should’ve come. I don’t like people disobeying me”**

**“How did you come here without my permission?”**

The depiction of a guy apologizing to a woman for abusing her but being furious when she rejects him shows toxic masculinity that is intimately associated with control and anger. Due to his



victim's denial, the male in this situation can feel that his apology is not being accepted. This might be seen as an attack on his dominance.

Other ways of expressing anger include throwing objects like glass when a female disobeys him. Throwing objects like glass can put others at danger which also indicates the possibility of hurting girl or may result in her death. It is significant to notice that Raima avoids the man because of how he abused and kidnapped her. Because Raima is effectively telling him she doesn't want to talk to him but he interpret it as a challenge to his power. In the drama, the male is depicted terrifying and dominating the girl with his strength and anger. As a sign of his dominance over her, he is tearing the book to pieces. If she doesn't pay attention to him, he also threatens to harm her in the same way. This is a perfect illustration of how excessive masculinity may lead to abuse and violence.

**“The way I tore this into pieces, I’ll chop you in pieces if you don’t listen to me”**

In drama, man is seen using his physical strength to maintain control over the girl. He is clearly seen using force by grabbing her arm and pulling her. Kidnapping is also included. In scene, man kidnapped a girl as a means of maintaining control over the victim and preventing her from escape. Girl was kept in room against her will that shows her terrified and helpless. Man in the drama is seen doing psychological abuse to control the victim and make them feel powerless by telling her that she have no control over her life and are entirely depend on him.

**“Raima, I’ve turned all the ways of your life towards me. Wherever you run, you will find me because your destination and fate is me”**

The man's behavior is an obvious display of control over the woman which is an example of toxic masculinity. He is grabbing her arm and forcing her to get up, which is a physical act of power. He

also demands that she marry him as a way of imposing control over her life and choices.

**“When you know me so well, then get married to me”**

The man's actions have normalized violence against women. He ignores his wife's blackout as a tantrum and claims that he is unconcerned. When media portrays violence against women as normal act, it sends the message that it is acceptable and not to be taken seriously. The normalization of violence may have terrible consequences for victims. It can make them feel alienated and helpless.

**“Women are in a habit of throwing tantrums and I’m aware of her actions”**

The depiction of a guy apologizing to a woman for abusing her but being furious when she rejects him shows toxic masculinity that is intimately associated with control and anger. He normalizes violence by denying that he committed a crime and claiming that he basically achieved his heart's desire. This sends the message that violence against women is not a crime and that using violence to satisfy one's desires is acceptable.

**“No, not crime, I fulfilled my heart’s desire”**

## **Theme 2**

### **Invisible chains: Stripping away autonomy**

Manipulation is the use of lies or threats to control the behavior of another person.

Denial of choice is the act of blocking someone from choosing their own choices.

In the drama, the man's attitude is shown dominant and aggressive. He is attempting to gain control over the girl's behaviors, thoughts and even relationships. He is also alienating her from her family and friends. He manipulates the girl by instructing her to respect his likes and dislikes and to not call out his cousin's name in front of him. He is essentially implying that if she does not do what he says, he will be upset.

The line "you are mine" is a way of expressing ownership and control over a woman. Toxic masculinity makes women feel threatened, abused and disrespected. It implies that the male feels he has the authority to control the woman's behavior and make life decisions for her without her consent. This is a scenario of emotional manipulation since it is intended to make the female feel responsible for the happiness and well-being of the man. To prevent making him upset, the male is effectively implying that the girl must follow his every desire. This form of manipulation may be quite powerful since it makes the girl feel responsible or forced to do what the man desires. She may also begin to distrust her own decision-making and rethink her actions from fear of upsetting the man. As a result, she may face denial of choice. Such scenes have the potential to glorify or normalize toxic masculinity and violence against women.

**“You’re mine. Only my name should be on your lips and I’ve full faith that you’ll care for my likes and dislikes. I don’t like Haris. Don’t take his name again”.**

This is an extremely dominating and abusive behavior. She has the right to make her own life decisions including who she marries, but the guy is depicted denying the girl's choice by not allowing her to say no. A form of coercion is also shown as he puts pressure on her by telling her they're getting married the next day, even though she doesn't want to.

**“Look Raima, I’ve decided, we’re getting married tomorrow, be ready”.**

For viewers, these portrayals might normalize and legitimize forced marriage and abuse against women. When people see forced marriage presented as normal in the media, they are more likely to accept it as a real-life option for themselves. Forced marriage is frequently based on the assumption that males possess and control women. When dramas portray forced marriage favorably, it can perpetuate damaging misconceptions. Furthermore, such dramas might convey a message that

women's permission is not required for marriage.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Shattered reflections: Twisting honor as a weapon of gaslighting, humiliation and blaming**

A girl's honor is frequently characterized by her purity and modesty. This viewpoint is based on the patriarchal concept that women are the property of males and that the way they act reflects the dignity of their fathers or spouses.

It is shown that the man's depiction of the girl's return home as "dishonor" exemplifies misogyny and toxic masculinity. The claim that "no one will accept a girl who spends the night outside" reflects a patriarchal society. The idea that a woman's status is judged by her purity is very patriarchal and damaging. Also, it is a sort of gaslighting and a manipulative technique in which the abuser causes the victim to question their own reality. The man is seen attempting to convince the girl that spending the night outside her house is improper.

**“What did you come back for? What is there to be happy about? A girl who can stay out for so long, who will accept her. I can never do that”.**

Gas lighting may be extremely harmful to a victim's self-esteem and mental health. It might make it difficult for the victim to trust their own decision. In the drama, the man's behavior is also portrayed as gas lighting, a type of emotional abuse in which the abuser manipulates the victim into doubting their own reality. The man is seen gaslighting the girl by claiming her of betraying him, despite the fact that he forced her to marry him and assaulted her family. He also attempts to convince her that she is the one who is at fault and that she carries the responsibility for his actions.

**“What have I done to you? You are all mixed up. You and your family have betrayed me”.**

The way the man behaved in the drama is an indication of how fragile his masculinity is. Fragile masculinity refers to how men may feel triggered or insecure when their traditional conceptions of masculinity are questioned. In one scene, man attempts to manipulate his wife by claiming that she is incorrectly teaching their daughter and that they have forgot their family norms. He is actually upset because his daughter is challenging his authority by questioning him.

**“You are teaching the child wrong thing. You people forgot the customs of this home, she has the courage to stand in front of me and questions me”.**

Viewers who are constantly exposed to it may begin to accept these behaviors as normal. As a result, they may accept or even promote violence and misogyny in their personal lives.

Any act or behavior meant to embarrass, degrade, or shame a woman is considered humiliation against women. It can be carried out by actions or words. The guy in drama gives a negative view of masculinity to his son-in-law. It's critical to keep in mind that women are individuals with their own thoughts and emotions, and that we should respect their viewpoints. Saying that their thoughts and feelings are unimportant devalues them and upholds a misogynistic culture. He is teaching that it's OK to ignore the views of others, particularly those of women.

**“If men worry about women’s mood, nothing will be fine”**

The man's behavior towards his wife is damaging, unacceptable and misogynistic. By making fun of her education, he is alienating her. This is a type of emotional abuse that can seriously harm mental health and self-worth. It is also damaging and patriarchal for the male to humiliate his wife by saying that he should marry someone else and to think that his education makes him better

than his wife. He is assuming that in order for women to be valued and respected members of society, they must all possess a high level of education.

**“It’s not important for me to answer everything you say. No brain, no education and no manners. Our wedding had no match. I’m highly educated man from Cambridge and you are a matrix pass. I should have married a woman who was at-least as educated as me. Because I could talk to her when I needed to”**

In one scene, he humiliates his wife by saying that he had tutor for her for over 3 years so she can learn some manners but she is still stupid. By calling her stupid and fool, the guy displays toxic masculinity. Even though he was the one talking to his second wife during their time together, he is exhibiting toxic masculinity by being upset with his wife for interrupting him.

**“There are some manners, some ways. I had a tutor for you for 3 years so that you would learn something but you didn’t. You are a fool”**

In drama, not only his wife is being humiliated but also his daughter. She challenged him if he would kick out his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife she won’t get married which triggered his authority. He humiliated her and denied by cursing her. Emotional discomfort, fear, and perplexity are probably what she went through.

**“Raima won’t go from here, she will live here forever. If you have a problem, don’t get married. Go to hell”**

The man acts in an emotionally abusive manner. He warns 1st wife not to be envious by making offensive comparisons between his first and second wives. Abusers often employ this basic technique to instill a sense of worthlessness and insecurity in their victims. The man is seen attempting to convince his 1st wife that she is the issue and that her jealousy is unjustified.

He's encourages her to just be happy for him and his second wife and that her sentiments are unimportant. This is how he managed to minimize the feelings of his first wife. Numerous motives might be behind the man's actions. It's possible that he's attempting to take control over and instill dependency on his first wife. Or simply, he's attempting to correct her for something she didn't do.

**“Even if you wear such an expensive set, you will stay the same and the best part, in this age, the diamond won’t suit you. I wanted a wife like a diamond that makes this home shine, that is what Raima did. Don’t get jealous on the inside, this has made you like this. Look at me, I’m so happy. See Raima, she is happy”**

In these dramas, man's behavior is detrimental as well since they promote violence against women. It sends a message that treating women disrespectfully is OK when men mistreat and degrade wives. Other types of violence, such physical and sexual assault, may result from this.

In blaming, abusers frequently employ the strategy of blaming the victim in order to place the blame for their own acts on their victims. In one scene, man blames for both his acts of aggression against her and for bringing him to fall in love with her. By blaming that she was the one who pulled him in and that she neglected his requests, he is effectively accusing her of being responsible for his behavior. Because it keeps the victim from receiving the help and encouragement they require, this kind of blame is extremely damaging. In addition, the victim may experience emotions of shame and guilt because they believe they are responsible for the abuse.

**“Your crime is that you have struck my heart”.**

Also, it is also shown that women are responsible for men’s happiness. A man is seen blaming his desire to marry on his first wife. He claims that he had no choice but to marry someone else in order to find peace because of her terrible behavior.

He shifts the attention away from his own actions and makes his wife feel responsible for his happiness by blaming her. He is also utilizing her need for calm to guilt-trip her into maintaining in the relationship, despite the fact that he is the one causing her grief.

**“Your behavior forced me; I need peace so I like spending more time with Raima”**

He informs his first wife that he is leaving her for his second wife since she is more acceptable and does not confront him. The man claims that his second wife "talks according to his mood" and does not use sarcasm against him. It indicates that he exerts control over his second wife's speech and actions.

Toxic masculinity is also shown in the man's opinion that his second wife is superior since she "talks according to his mood" and avoids from using sarcasm. According to this view, males should not be questioned or challenged.

**“I’m going to the one who talks according to my mood and doesn’t throw sarcasm at me”**

#### **Theme 4**

**A golden cage of power, threat, order and control.**

A clear display of masculine power occurs when the guy grabs the woman's arm and says, "Why don't you understand, you're mine." He is attempting to oppress her and exert control over her by use of his physical power and authority. He views her as his own property, something he owns and is free to use whatever he pleases. In addition, he is claiming control and ownership over her via his words.

This kind of masculinity is really hazardous and poisonous. It is predicated on the notion that males



have a right to govern women because they are superior to them. Insecurity and the need to feel strong are frequently the sources of this kind of masculine strength.

**“Why don’t you understand that you are mine”**

Males are frequently perceived as superior to women in terms of strength and entitlement, there may be circumstances in which men feel a right to abuse and control over women. It may be seen as a direct threat, implying that if the female tries to leave him, the man is violent and would follow through on his warning. Overall, the scenes are alarming picture of the power dynamics.

To tell a girl that I can find you and bring you back from anywhere and that she has no power over her own life. It's obvious from this ominous and frightening comment that the man attempts to manipulate the girl by spreading fear in her.

**“Don’t even think of disappearing again, I’ll find you from anywhere”**

Toxic masculinity is seen as the male yells at the woman and tells her she's not going anywhere. The male in the scene acts threatening and controlling the woman by utilizing his power. His declaration that "you're not going anywhere" is an obvious one of power and domination. The woman is being told by the man that she must obey him. He is attempting to control the woman's behavior by threatening her with his love. He is warning her not to hide anything from him and that refusing to do so will cause him to lose his affection. As a sort of domestic violence, this kind of behavior is referred to as coercive control. One partner may employ a range of approaches to dominate and control the other through a pattern of action.

The man's statement also implies that he does not have trust in the woman. He feels that if she is granted any privacy or autonomy, she will betray him. Another prevalent characteristic of coercive control is this lack of trust. In the drama scene that is being portrayed, the male is controlling the

woman's actions by threat of removing his affection. Because it preys on the woman's desire for love and approval, this is a particularly powerful method of control.

**“That’s it! Now you’re not going anywhere. From now on, if you do anything secretly, I’ll forget that I love you”**

Anger and a sense of superiority drive the man's choice to kidnap the girl. He is furious that the girl declined his offer of help, and he believes he has the right to dominate her since he is a male. The incident also highlights serious concerns about the nature of power and how it may be used and abused. The man's physical strength and position of leadership give him power. The drama scenario in which the man kidnaps the girl after she refuses his offer to drop her off at home demonstrates an obvious power imbalance. The male uses his physical power and position of authority to exert control over the girl. He is also using his authority to punish her for failing to do what he desires.

The man's kidnapping of the girl is an obvious display of authority. He is telling her that he is in charge and that she has no option but to obey him. He has the ability to become enraged and then act on it without consequence. The girl, on the other hand, is unable to express her rage or protect herself without risking more violence.

**“I’ve made you speechless by brining you here. I wanted to leave you at your home. You didn’t agree, so I got you to my home. I wanted to give you a lift, now see, Sardar Saif ur Rehman wants a lift from that girl”**

He was shown forcing the woman to marry him despite her evident rejection. He also begs forgiveness after marrying her; however she does not forgive him and curses him. He warns her that he never regrets what he did, demonstrating his lack of guilt for his acts.

Without her consent, he feels he has the right to govern the way she lives and make decisions for her. He also feels that he is superior over her and that his needs come first. She is compelled to marry a man who is disrespectful to her.

**“Saif ur Rehman never regrets. You don’t know Saif ur rehamn’s power and position”**

Further, he threatens to murder his cousin and her family if she does not forget him. He is also attempting to control her by telling her that he is more powerful and that he gets what he wants. The woman is clearly terrified of the man and she feels powerless to stop him.

In Pakistani drama, the depiction of a guy drinking wine on his wedding night is connected with toxic masculinity and authority. This is due to the perception that it is a means for the male to demonstrate his power and control over her.

**“I’ll kill Haris, who will stop me”**

**“Are you unaware of my power? I can do what you can’t even imagine. Forget them and Haris. Take his name out of your life”**

Man considers himself to be the leader of the home and feels that everyone else must follow him. This is a patriarchal notion born by toxic masculinity. The slaves' access to education is being restricted by the man's toxic masculinity. Since education is crucial for both personal and professional growth, this is a severe issue.

He declines to grant his wife permission to educate the servants. This is a type of oppression and control. He is effectively depriving the subordinates of their right to study and progress. He's informing his wife that no one is allowed to study or do anything without his consent. This demonstrates his belief that he has the authority to manage everyone in his family, including his

wife and servants.

**“With whose permission? She needs my permission. No one can study without my permission”**

His outraged response to his wife's claim of rights indicates that he thinks he is entitled to rule women. In addition, he feels that he owns his home and is free to do with it as he pleases, even if it means going against his wife's rights.

The husband's toxic masculinity in both dramas are demonstrated by his drive to rule and control women. Without getting permission, he feels right to make decisions on his wife's and other people's lives. In addition, he feels that women should submit to him since he is superior to them.

The man's toxic masculinity has several unfavorable effects. It keeps his first wife from taking charge of her own life and claiming her independence. Additionally, it makes the house feel oppressive and cold.

The drama demonstrates how relationships may become powerless due to toxic masculinity and the husband has control over his wife.

**“How dare you say that? This is my house, I can get who I want here”**

Furthermore, the man's threat to smash the heads of his wife and kid is especially alarming since it demonstrates how deeply rooted his poisonous views are. He is essentially saying that his family members' lives are useless to him and that he will kill them if they disobey him. He also says that if they challenge him, he will harm them. This indicates that he is prepared to use violence to control them.

The man's warning to his wife not let their daughter to challenge him is another indication of his urge to control. He desires total subordination to himself and to stop his daughter from ever gaining any sense of autonomy or independence.

**“You know well. For me, no one is worth anything. I can crush anyone. Don’t be mistaken. And tell Abeera not to mess with Raima”**

The man's threat to enter the girl's home is an evident violation of her privacy and boundaries. His use of security guards to frighten her increases the impression of risk and threat. The scenario in the drama in where the man stands outside the girl's house late at night with his guards and threatens to break in if she does not come out in 5 minutes is damaging. It normalizes a potentially unsafe and damaging behavior.

It implies that he has the will to use force in order to get what he desires from that girl. His threat to enter her home is particularly alarming since it demonstrates that he is refusing to respect her privacy. The scenario of a female standing outside her house becomes much more hazardous by the fact that it happens late at night.

The fact that this incident is shown as "normal" is very disturbing. It gives the message that it is OK for males to threaten and breach the limits of women. This message is negative, because it has the potential to lead to real-world violence against women.

**“You’ve five minutes; if you don’t come out I’ll come in”**

The scenario in the drama in which the guy threatens the girl to just say his name or her father will be imprisoned is an obvious example of manipulation and coercion. The guy is controlling the girl by using her love and respect for her father. In an attempt to silence her, he is threatening to ruin

her father's life. This is clear misuse of authority and a violation of the girl's rights.

The reality that the girl is considered as her father's "honor" is also problematic. This implies that the girl's worth is determined by her relationship with her father and her ability to protect his reputation. This is a harmful message to audience. Girls should be appreciated for themselves, not for their capacity to protect their families' honor. Overall, the situation in the drama is horrifying. It exemplifies how threat and manipulation may be used to silence women. It also reflects the misogynistic behavior that frequently drives violence against women.

**“If you say anything other than my name your father will rot in jail for the rest of his life”**

In drama, man is seen using his position of authority to force the girl to agree to marry him, despite the fact that she is plainly not interested. He threatens the girl that he wants to marry her with respect but that if she refuses, he can do anything is a clear instance of coercion.

The threat from man that if she declines, he can do anything is very disturbing. He's basically arguing that woman has no choice but to go along with his order. It's particularly odd that the man uses the term "respect" to express what he wants. His attitude is far from polite. He considers the girl as an object to be controlled rather than as a person with autonomy.

**“I want to marry you; I want to adopt you with respect. Otherwise, I can do anything”**

The moment in the drama where the guy warns the girl's father that he can't live without his daughter and that he would murder everyone if he doesn't give her hand is a clear instance of coercion. The man is using his influence and position to convince the father to marry off his daughter to him, despite the fact that she is obviously not interested.

It clearly implies a threat of violence. He's basically claiming that the father has no choice but obey with his requests. It's particularly disturbing that the man uses the terms "can't live without" to express his affections for the girl. It implies that he has an obsessive obsession with her and considers her as property. The threat to kill everyone indicates that the individual is unstable and violent. He is prepared to turn to violence to achieve his goals.

**“I can’t live and if I can’t live, I won’t let anyone live, it is better than dying, marry her to me”**

In addition, the scenes seem misogynistic and offensive. It promotes the belief that women are in charge of maintaining the protection and honor of their families. Not only this, if she denies, her whole family will face the consequences and will be murdered. It defines his intensity of obsession for her. Because the man is threatening to harm the woman and her family, it is more terrible because it is directed at her own life and innocent loved ones. In order to convince her, he's threatening to end her life if she tries to run from him.

**“I’ll kill all the people here. Now their lives are in your hands, save them”**

**“If you think of going anywhere, you will die by your own hands”**

**“If you run now, I will end your life”**

**“Now, you see what I’m doing to you and your family”**

Another reason the scenario matters is that it highlights how important consent is. The girl has not given the man her consent, yet he is still threatens her that she must obey him. Her limits and her freedom to make her own decisions are being crossed by this. He is informing her that if she

doesn't follow his instructions, there will be consequences. The guy represents a patriarchy.

**“I don’t want to force you so don’t force me”**

In Pakistani dramas, it's usual to see a man threaten his wife, saying he would marry again very soon. It is often used to depict the woman as helpless and the guy as dominant and in authority. If his wife cannot live up to his standards, he can be frustrated in the marriage and be open to replacing her. No matter how poorly they are treated, women are frequently expected to put up with their husbands' inappropriate behavior. Women are kept quiet and are discouraged from questioning their husbands' authority by the possibility of a second marriage.

It normalizes the notion that husbands should be in charge of their wives' life. In drama, the man is stating that he will marry someone. This kind of thinking is harmful because it breeds aggression and violence.

**“I will marry, when I have to”**

In the drama scene, the man forces the girl to agree to marriage by threatening to harm and humiliate her cousin. This is a perfect illustration of coercive control. It's awful when the man threatens her by playing a video of his fiancée getting thrashed. In a sense, he's using it to remind the girl that he is not afraid to use violence when necessary. The girl's family is shown in a dangerous situation since a humiliating video of his cousin being assaulted, was shown to her. She could believe that she has no option but to consent to the marriage out of fear for what would happen to her family if she didn't comply. He also liked the pitiful way she was sobbing and begging in order to stop his guard and release his cousin.

**“I’ll take his life, you won’t get the change to go and bury him properly. Raima, I’m not**



**joking, nor do I lie. If you do anything like this, then your cousin, what is his name, Haris Alvi, his life's guarantee will be over. You have time till the evening. Think about it"**

The drama shows an abusive relationship in which the male controls the woman by threatening her. If she disobeys him, he threatens to kill her and dispose of her body in a place where no one will discover it. He also threatens to kill a member of her family. The woman demonstrates her strength by responding to his threats with calmness. She's not going to let him terrorize her, and she's not going to give him the joy of seeing her terrified. She is aware that he is attempting to exert power over her, and she will not allow him to do so.

The man's respond to her calm reaction is to escalate his threats. He is now threatening to murder her fiancée, demonstrating that he is willing to go to considerable measures to dominate her. He is also trying to cut off her from her family, to ensure she has no one to turn to for protection.

**"You have no idea what I can do to you. I'll throw you to a place where no one will be able to find you"**

Man considers woman to be his property and feel empowered to treat her anyway he pleases, even if it means hurting her. The fact that in drama, man threatens to murder his servant if she mistreats the girl or even thinks of harming her shows how possessive and controlling he is. He wouldn't allow anyone else to hurt her but he has the right to do same abuse or torcher to her as if she is his property. Women are frequently viewed as property and their rights are frequently subordinate to men's. This may result in circumstances where women are exploited and mistreated with no way to escape them.

**"If I want, I can get her in 2 minutes. She is in my home, in my control, but no, I'll not do that. I'll marry her"**

Man imposing his dominance over a woman by demanding her to marry him and threatening her to not create any scene. This is coercion in the form of a threat of violence. By calling her by his last name and acting if she is his property, the male is also objectifying her. The drama also demonstrates how his actions affect her life.

**“I came to tell you, don’t create a scene”**

On top of that, a man warns her that even if she is not hungry, she must be at the table with him whenever he calls and that he hates refusals. It is obvious that this is a threat intended to terrorize the woman. The drama also revolves around the woman's challenges in responding to the man's desires. It could demonstrate how his actions impact her life.

**“Remember one thing, I don’t like refusal, nor do I like to wait. You will come when I call you, you hear me? Get ready quickly”**

**“You said no to my order and I don’t like it when people don’t listen to me. Whether you are hungry or not, get up and come with me and eat”**

It's unsettling to see the man inform his wife to not interfere in his work and that if she hadn't been his wife, he would have punished her like a servant. It implies that he is also capable of violence.

That man's statements constitute as a red flag. It assumes that he has the ability to harm his wife physically. He is intended to scare and dominate his wife. He devalues while making her feel unworthy. It also implies that she is not secure from him, not even in her own house. He is also seen controlling her decision while restricting her from talking to servants. His assertion that if she had not been his wife, he would have treated her like a servant is an obvious display of violence. It also reflects his underlying misogyny and attitude that women are inferior to males.

**“If you weren’t my beloved wife, I would have punched you like Taba (servant). Try not to interfere in my work”**

**“I don’t like listening to nonsense. I’d better not see you talking to servants like this”**

Man uses patriarchal oppression to manipulate his wife and daughter. He tells them that he is the only one who is capable of making decisions in the family and that they must obey him even if they disagree with him. He is threatening to abandon them if they do not agree with him, which is a kind of emotional blackmail. He is seen mistreating and manipulating his wife and daughter with his power and authority. He also exhibits an attitude of disregard for their feelings. This is a hazardous and destructive behavior. It may create a fearful and threatening environment in the house, making it difficult for the wife and daughter to feel safe and loved. The man's actions are equally damaging to his daughter. It teaches her that males have the right to control and terrorize women. It also teaches her that her opinion and feelings are worthless. This might have a long-term negative influence on her self-esteem and relationships.

**“The decision is made. I’m leaving you and your mother. Right now, in my senses, Mrs. Farkhanda”**

## Discussion

This study investigated the portrayal of violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV shows and how it impacts viewers' views and behaviors. Based on the findings of TV dramas, physical and verbal violence against women is depicted in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas, and the research study identified four themes in this regard: anger, violence and its normalization; control and threatening; woman responsible for man happiness; and both physical and verbal violence. The studies also found that violence against women is frequently depicted in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas as a normal levels, legitimate, and predictable result of their actions or decisions. As a result, these dramas reinforce patriarchal standards and mindsets which subordinate women to men and make them reliant on their permission and support. These depictions match up with past research that has condemned the media for propagating prejudices about gender and violence.

Some local researchers have also expressed in their studies that violence against women is depicted in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas in different ways. It is constantly depicted in TV dramas that a woman is responsible for the honor of her family.. A woman who goes out of the house without the permission of her father or husband is humiliated and faces the worst situation (Khan, 2020). Furthermore, women have been portrayed as submissive woman who stay at home and care for their families. It is even the duty of women to keep a man pleased to obey him, and to tolerate his cruel conduct with a smile (Hussain & Bittles, 1999). The key results of this study are based on the analysis of four themes: The first theme demonstrates that the amount of television scenes with actions of attack against women as the main scenes has grown considerably over the last 40 years (Jamieson and Romer 2014). It's nearly hard to prevent violence in today's television dramas; what was once an unusual storyline on television is now routine. The second theme demonstrates how violence is frequently associated with controlling, anger, and protection. Franiuk and Scherr (2013) define "hidden violence" as violence that occurs behind closed doors. The third theme reveals that

representations of violence consist of verbal, physical, mental, and sexual harassment as well as disrespect and threatening. Similarly, Karim (2008) found that representations of violence against women on television are not just physical; they can also involve interpersonal violence or emotional and physical abuse.

### **Implications**

Television is the most important tool of information and has a deep influence on people. People's opinions are formed by the positive and negative portrayal of different aspects on television. This study's findings have significant ramifications for theory as well as practice in the fields of media and gender studies. The findings add to the existing literature on the portrayal and effects of gender violence in television and film. Violence against women is not only ubiquitous, but also normalized and idealized in popular media, particularly in genres aimed at young audiences, according to the research. This implies that media producers as well as consumers should be more conscious of and critical of the concepts and values transmitted through television narratives and visuals.

### **Recommendation**

The findings have practical consequences for media education, legislation, and actions. Media education programs should strive to improve understanding and promote abilities to think critically among media consumers, particularly young people, in order to assist them in resisting and challenging the negative impacts of violence in the media. Media legislators as well as regulator ought to think about higher standards and ratings for violence against women in media programs, plus additional assistance and funding for screenwriters who want to create more positive and diverse depictions of gender and relationships. Media advocacy organizations and activists should continue to monitor and uncover negative aspects of violence in the media, and also promote and celebrate media content that presents alternative and powerful perspectives on gender and relationships.

## **Limitations**

There are certain limitations to this study that should be taken into account. For first of all, This study is only devoted to examining verbal and physical violence against women in Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. the sample of dramas was confined to the most popular in the years 2020 and 2022, which may not reflect the broad spectrum of Pakistani Urdu TV dramas. Secondly, the study did not directly test the effects of TV dramas violence on audiences' beliefs and actions, but instead inferred them from content analysis and social learning theory. Thirdly, the study did not take into account the importance of other elements, such as viewers' traits, socioeconomic status, and knowledge regarding media, which could influence their understanding and reaction to media violence. Future study may alleviate these constraints by increasing the number of dramas in the sample, performing surveys or tests with viewers, and adding other theoretical findings.

## Conclusion

Pakistani Urdu TV drama portrays verbal and physical abuse against women in an unacceptable stereotyped and destructive manner. These depictions support the patriarchal misogynistic mindset in society which contributes to the ongoing practice of violence against women. Violence, threats, harassment, and authority over women are portrayed in acceptable ways in these dramas. The normalization of violence against women, which is frequently rationalized through a perspective of hyper-masculinity, has far-reaching implications. It desensitizes viewers to violence, creates a climate in which violence against women is accepted and tolerated, and may even inspire or support such acts. These results emphasize the significance of combating negative gender stereotypes and encouraging more supportive and empowering representations of men and women by drawing attention to this normalization. Through increasing awareness, confronting damaging stereotypes, and advocating for more truthful and constructive representations of women, we may start the process of breaking down patriarchal conventions that give rise to violence against women and create an environment that values equality, respect, and female autonomy for everyone.

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