

TRENDS AND DYNAMICS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

**SURVEY REPORT
AUGUST 2020**

AwazCDS-Pakistan: Established in 1995 and is registered as not for profit organization with registrar joint stock companies under Societies Registration Act 1860 and enjoys special consultative status with United Nation's Economic & Social Council (UN ECOSOC). AwazCDS-Pakistan's core mission is to develop integrated and innovative solutions in cooperation with partners at all levels to secure the future of marginalized communities especially by creating rightful spaces and choices of life. For more information please visit www.awazcds.org.pk.

Ujala: is national network for creating rightful spaces & choices of life. Ujala is comprised of 50 civil society organizations working together for the rights of children, women, young people, person living with disabilities & transgender communities through grassroots mobilization and suggesting legislative reforms in the country regarding Gender Based Violence, Life Skills Based Education, Youth Friendly Health Services, Early Age Marriages and issues related to Stigma & Discrimination. Network is being managed by Awaz Foundation Pakistan: Centre for Development Services.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The novel coronavirus that first emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019 continues to impact the lives of people and is affecting all segments of the population across the world equally. Like in other countries, due to widespread of Covid-19 in Pakistan, owing to several restrictions imposed economically and socially, there is an exponential increase in the level of stress among people. Not only this, but it also has an adverse impact on mental health and overall behavior of people. Several studies across the globe have been conducted on prevalence of anxiety, depression and stress among masses during the period of COVID-19. Different researches have shown that people affected from psychological disorders during Covid-19 period shows symptoms like emotional distress, depression, stress, mood swings, irritability, insomnia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress and anger.¹ According to UNDP, due to this increased stress caused by COVID-19, cases of violence especially gender-based violence and domestic violence have been raised exponentially at global level.² Therefore, AwazCDS decided to conduct a survey to ascertain trends and dynamics of gender based violence during COVID-19 in Pakistan.

Process and Methodology: Under Ujala program, Awaz Foundation Pakistan with support of its **48 partners** conducted an online survey on situation of gender-based violence amidst covid-19 situation in Pakistan. The survey was conducted in **44 districts** across Pakistan including all four provinces and region of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, to analyse the real ground situation of occurrence of gender based violence during Covid-19 and its impact among all groups i.e. men, women, young girls, young boys, children, person living with disabilities and transgender community. Two comprehensive surveys were designed to gather responses from two groups i.e. **married and unmarried**. The surveys covered important aspects related to **gender discrimination, behavioral changes, availability of health related services, discriminatory behavior, trends of early age marriages, types of violence increased and services accessible for PLWDs and transgender community during COVID-19**. Total **455** responses were received from all over Pakistan. The respondents were **members of Provincial and District Advisory Panels of Ujala Network**, who one way or another are the groups of key influentials playing a vital role in decision making processes and who are sensitized and well aware of the issues related to reproductive health rights in their respective districts. Under Ujala, these Advisory Panels are established to get support from different departments of government, media, legal fraternity, NGOs/INGOs, key decision makers, young people etc. to support the cause of reproductive health rights in Pakistan. An online tool was used to receive responses from the Advisory Panels. The links of both surveys were shared with Ujala partners to further circulate them among the members of Advisory Panels of their respective districts and to get their responses.

The survey result covers the findings that highlight the status of gender based violence in Pakistan at large level during the corona outbreak along with suggestions and recommendations mentioned at the end of the study.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-020-00589-w>

² <https://www.undp.org/>; <https://www.unwomen.org/>

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

Total 455 respondents (302 males and 153 females) participated in the survey. Out of 455, 260 respondents were married and 195 were unmarried from across Pakistan.

TOTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED



AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Age was categorized into three sub-categories i.e. 15-29yrs; 30-60yrs and above 60yrs. Highest 59.1% respondents were of age between 30- 60 years, 38% of the respondents were between 15-29 years and rest 2.9% were above 60 yrs. Total 57.1% respondents were married while 42.9% were unmarried.

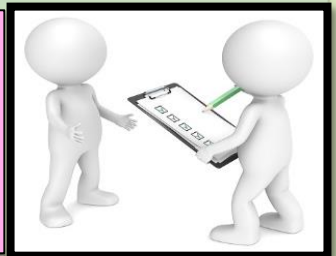
It was observed that overall 86.6% of the respondents were graduate or they had qualification above graduation. While 9.7% respondents were having education of intermediate, 3.3% and 0.4% of matric and below matric respectively.

QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

PROFESSION OF RESPONDENTS

The responses were received from respondents belongs to different professions like government sector, private sector, student, media, education department, NGOs and law experts. However, majority of the responses were from NGOs with 29%, 23.4% from private jobs and 19.9% from Government. It would be interesting to know that regardless of gender and marital status, 95.6% participants were from working category.

While asking the respondents if they themselves are completing the survey, total 94.3% of the respondents said 'yes' and only 5.7% of the respondents told that someone else helped them in completing the survey as the format was online. From gender lens, 93.4% males and 96.1% female respondents said that they completed the surveys themselves.



3.1% persons living with disabilities also participated in the survey.

Responding to COVID-19 test, 92.5% of the respondents said that they remained save from the virus. Only 7.5% of the respondents shared that they had been tested corona positive.



Behavioral changes: Surprisingly, 72.1% respondents said they have observed increase in the negative behaviors like aggression and irritation among people around them. From this 72.1%, 71.5% males and 73.2% females witnessed the changes in people regarding behavior patterns.

From married and unmarried group, the percentages received from both categories were also observed to be above 70% who agreed with the statement that corona has adversely brought change in people's behavior.

Level of tolerance: 69.5% males and 71.9% females believes that intolerance among people has increased during COVID-19. Whereas, 73% of the respondents from married group and 66.6% from unmarried group also agreed with it.



Discrimination on the basis of gender: 48.4% of the total respondents believe that during Covid-19; there is a sub-conscious increase in the gender discrimination among girls and boys during their stay at home. For example, increased responsibility on girls to perform house chores etc. Whereas, percentage of female respondents is observed to be high with 59.5% who believes that such discrimination occurs, whereas, percentage of male respondents is 42.7%.

However, responses received from married and unmarried group is observed to be same with 48% of responses received from both groups respectively.

Behavioral changes in children: 64% of total respondents said that they have observed negative behavioral changes in children during Covid period, whereas 63% and 65.1% responses were received from married and unmarried group respectively who said that Covid-19 has a negative impact on behavioral patterns in children.



Availability of reproductive health services for young people: Only 19.3% respondents said that the reproductive health services for young girls and boys were available during covid-19, whereas, 33.8% respondents said that no such services were available and 46.8% of respondents had no information.

Behavioral changes with spouse during Covid-19: While asking from married group if there is any change in behavior with their spouse during Covid-19, 50.8% of the respondents told that their behavior with their spouses were remained same, while 49.2% of the respondents said that their behavior have negatively affected with their spouses during Covid-19. Similarly, 49.3% male and 49.1% female respondents agreed with negative behaviors of their spouses during Covid-19.



Behavioral vulnerabilities among spouses: While asking from married group that who they think is more affected by aggression and irritable behavior among spouses during Covid-19, 56.2% of the respondents said that husbands and 43.8% of the respondents were with view that wives are more affected by such behaviors during Covid-19. However, from gender lens, interestingly, 60.5% males said that husbands are more affected and 60% females said that wives are more affected from such behaviors during Covid-19.



Marital relationship during Covid-19: While asking from married group if they have observed any difference in their marital and sexual relationship due to the current situation of covid-19, a large percentage of 48.8% of the respondents said 'yes' and 51.2% respondents said that situation of covid-19 has not carried any difference in their sexual and marital relationship.

While asking from marital group if this pandemic has limited their sexual relationship with their spouse so 58.8% respondents said 'yes' and 41.2% respondents said 'no'.



Married group was asked if they had continued their effort of having children during the period of Covid, total 20.4% respondents said 'yes' while 32.7% said 'no' and 46.9% respondents said that their family is already completed.



Availability of health services to pregnant women:

Overall 38.9% of the respondents knew such cases where pregnant women had faced difficulties in accessing the health related services during pandemic, while 20.2% said 'no' and 40.9% said that they do not know any such case. However, 44.23% respondents from married group and 31.79% respondents from unmarried group knew cases around them where women faced difficulties in availing health related services during pregnancy.



Provision of facilities to women who had miscarriage:

Respondents were asked if they knew incidents where women had faced miscarriage during covid-19, 63.7% of the respondents said that they don't know about such cases, 27% respondents said that facilities were not timely provided and only 9.2% of the respondents informed that women who had miscarriage got timely facilitation.



Availability of health related services during child

birth: Surprisingly, highest 49.2% of the respondents said that they have seen people facing hurdles in availing health related services during child birth, 18.9% said 'no' and 31.9% said that they do not know about such cases. Whereas, 56.54% of married and 39.49% unmarried respondents have also observed difficulties in availing health related services.

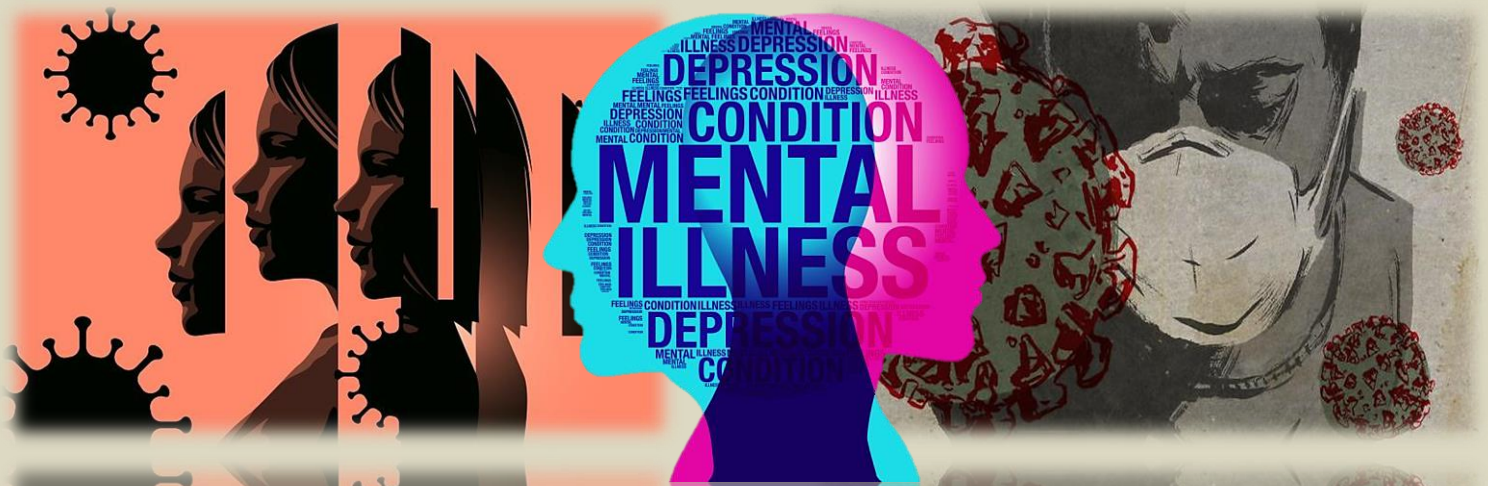


Availability of health related services required during pre & post-natal:

40.2% of respondents said that they have observed people facing difficulties in availing required pre and post-natal services. Same percentage of responses was received from respondents who did not know about any such case and 19.6% respondents said that people did not face any difficulty.

Behavior of doctors with patients: Surprisingly, 53.4% of respondents said that they have observed aggressive and discriminatory behavior of doctors with their patients during Covid-19, whereas 18.9% responses were received under category 'don't know'. From gender lens, 56% of males and 48.4% of females respondents said that behavior of doctors with their patients were found aggressive and discriminatory.





Trend of violence during pandemic: 58.5% of respondents said that cases of violence around them have increased during covid-19. 28.4% said 'no' and 13.2% said that they do not know if the cases of violence are increased. From gender lens, 55.6% of males and 64.1% of female respondents said that violence during covid-19 period has increased around them.

Type of violence increased during Covid-19: Overall 44.2% respondents said that during covid-19 period, mental torture like fear, ill-intentional criticism etc. is observed highly increased. Whereas, respondents shared 18% verbal abuse, 11% beating and 5.3% sexual violence/ abuse are observed as increased during pandemic. However, 21.5% responses were received under category 'don't know' if violence has increased.

According to male respondents, mental torture is increased by 41.4%, verbal abuse by 21.9%, beating 8.3% and sexual violence by 5.3%. Whereas, responses received from female respondents, mental torture is again observed high with 49.7%, beating 16.3%, verbal abuse 10.5% and sexual violence 5.2%.

According to married group, mental torture was observed increased by 42.31%, verbal abuse 21.9%, beating 10% and sexual violence/abuse 4.62%. Whereas, rendering to unmarried group, mental torture is increased by 46.6%, verbal abuse 12.8%, beating and sexual violence 12.3% and 6.15% respectively.

Harassment during Covid-19: While asking from respondents who do you think have faced more harassment during pandemic including young girls, young boys, PLWDs, transgender community and women. 35.8% and 26.6% of responses were received against 'young girls' and 'women' respectively. Whereas, 14.9% of the respondents said that "young boys" faced more harassment followed by 12.1% against transgender and 10.5% against category of PLWDs.



38.2% respondents observed an increased trend where parents are getting their children married at early age due to pandemic, whereas, 50.1% of the respondents said that no such increase was observed and 11.6% of respondents responded under the category 'don't know'.

Total 50.3% respondents said that during pandemic parents are more concerned about marriage of their daughters and only 6.2% respondents said that parents are concerned about marriage of their sons. Whereas 43.5% responses were received where parents were not worried about marriage of their children during pandemic.

Interestingly, 50.5% respondents said that cases of early age marriages were not increased during the corona period, however, 30.3% respondents responded they have witnessed '1-5 cases', 13.8% respondents witnessed '5-10 cases' and only 5.3% respondents said that more than 10 cases of early age marriages have occurred.

Trend of customary & traditional marriages during covid-19:

Respondents were asked what type of customary marriage practices have increased during COVID, 62.4% of the responses were received under category 'not increased', whereas, 'marriage without consent' is observed second highest with 16.7% and the category of 'increased demand of dowry' remained on third with 7.3%. Categories of 'marriage due to money', 'watta satta' and 'giving a daughter in return' were seen to be on least with 6.4%, 5.5% and 1.8% respectively.



TREND OF MARRIAGES DURING COVID-19

79.1% respondents shared that persons living with disabilities around them have not been tested positive for Covid-19.

When asked about the type of difficulties faced to PLWDs if they are tested positive so 58.2% of the respondents said that no difficulty was faced to them. However, 23.3% responses were received in which it was informed that PLWDs faced difficulty in accessing health services, 11.2% said that their loneliness was increased and 7.3% of respondents highlighted the discriminatory attitude was being maintained with them.



90.8% respondents said that transgenders around them have not been tested positive for Covid-19.

Whereas, 68.6% of the respondents said that transgenders did not face any difficulty after they tested positive. However, 12.5% responses were received in which it was shared that transgenders faced difficulty in accessing health services, 10.1% said that their loneliness was increased and 8.8% of respondents highlighted the discriminatory attitude was being maintained with them.



SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government must ensure the presence of psycho-social counseling centers with trained staff so that people may concern in time of their need especially during pandemic.
 2. Government needs to finance more on health services to ensure the timely and quality health services.
 3. Availability of health centers for young girls and young boys with trained staff to provide services and guidance on issues related to puberty. Their confidentiality within the centers must also be ensured.
 4. During pandemic, health facilities must be available on time and accessible for the women during pregnancy and pre & post birth of a child.
 5. Special health services and facilitation should be available for PWDs and transgenders.
 6. Government must create an online complaint portal where people can register their complaints regarding unavailability of facilities/services in hospitals and can report any unforeseen incident that happens with them in the hospitals.
 7. Raise awareness of police and judiciary about the increase of violence against women and girls during COVID-19 and provide training on how to respond, protect and refer victims and survivors to appropriate services.
 8. Additional resources should be allocated and evidence-based measures needs to be included to address violence against women and girls in COVID-19 national health and protection plans.
 9. Special, digital and modern means of education should be adopted to engage children meaningfully.
 10. Both Government and civil society organizations need to educate people on issues related to behavioral changes, psychological distresses and mental health.
 11. Timely and effective legislation is required related to violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab and ensure implementation of already existing laws related to domestic violence in Balochistan and Sindh.
 12. Local government system should be strengthened so as they should reach to communities immediately in the time of need.
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ANNEXURE

A-QUESIONNAIRE

ONLINE SURVEY FOR THE ANALYSIS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19 PERIOD

1. Name
2. District
3. Email address
4. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Gender is not mentioned
 - Do not want to share
5. Age
 - 15-29 years
 - 30- 60 years
 - Above 60 years
6. Occupation
 - Government Job
 - Private Job
 - Student
 - Media
 - Education Department
 - Ngo
 - Law Expert
 - Jobless
7. Qualification
 - Below Matric
 - Matric
 - F.A.
 - B.A.
 - Masters
 - Above Masters
8. Are you completing this survey:
 - Yourself, or
 - Someone else is helping you to complete it?
9. Do you have any physical disability?
 - Yes
 - No
10. Have you been tested positive for Covid-19?
 - Yes
 - No

Behavior among each other's during Covid-19 period

11. Do you feel that there is an increase in the behavioral change like being more irritable of people around you during Covid-19?
 - Yes
 - No

12. Do you feel that there is more intolerance among people around you during covid-19?
 - Yes
 - No

13. Due to the constantly stay of children at home during corona period, do you think that there is a subconscious increase in the gender discrimination among girls and boys? For example, the responsibility on girls to perform house chores has observed to be increased, and no participation of boys to share the burden of house chores and perform outside's task etc.
 - Yes
 - No

14. In your opinion, what type of behavioral changes has been observed in children during corona situation?
 - Positive
 - Negative

Below 5 questions from 15-19 were asked only from 'Married Group'

15. Do you think that there is an increase in your behavioral changes (for example being harsh and irritable) with your spouse during covid-19 period?
 - Yes
 - No

16. Who do you think is more affected by aggression and irritable behavior among spouses during Covid-19?
 - Husband
 - Wife

17. Have you observed any difference in your sexual and marital relationship due to the current situation of Covid-19?
 - Yes
 - No

18. Do you think if this pandemic has limited your sexual relationship with your spouse?
 - Yes
 - No

19. Did you continue your effort of having children during the period of corona virus?
 - Yes
 - No
 - My family is already completed

ANALYSIS ON THE HEALTH FACILITIES BEING PROVIDED DURING CORONA SITUATION

20. Do you know any case where pregnant women have faced difficulty to access the health related facilities during pandemic?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
21. Have you observed if people in Covid-19 have faced difficulties in availing health related services during child birth?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
22. Do you think that during covid-19 facilities were timely provided to women who faced miscarriage?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
23. Have you observed if people have faced difficulties in availing basic health services required during pre and post birth of a child?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
24. Have you observed the aggressive and discriminatory behavior of doctors with their patients during covid-19?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
25. Do you think that reproductive health services were available for young boys and girls during pandemic?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE DURING THE PERIOD OF CORONA VIRUS

26. Do you think that the cases of violence around you have increased during the pandemic?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
27. What type of violence was highly observed by you?
- Verbal abuse
 - Beating
 - Sexual violence/abuse
 - Mental torture like fear, ill-intentioned criticism, sarcasm etc.
 - Don't know

28. Have you observed an increased trend of parents in getting their children married at early age due to pandemic?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

29. What do you think, parents were found more concerned on marriage of their:

- Son
- Daughter
- Parents are not worried

30. How many cases of early marriages were observed?

- 1-5
- 5-10
- More than 10
- Not increased

31. In your opinion what kind of customary and traditionally marriages are increased during covid-19?

- Exchange marriage (watta satta)
- Increased demand of dowry
- Giving a daughter in return
- Marriage without consent
- Not increased

32. What do think who has faced more harassment during pandemic due to increased stress and anxiety?

- Young boys
- Young girls
- Women
- PWDs
- Transgenders

33. Has any PWD around you tested positive for corona virus?

- Yes
- No

34. If being tested positive, what type of difficulty did the person face?

- Access to health facilities
- Increase loneliness
- Discriminatory attitude
- No difficulty was faced

35. Has any transgender around you tested positive for corona virus?

- Yes
- No

36. If being tested positive, what type of difficulty did the person face?

- Access to health facilities
 - Increase in their loneliness
 - Discriminatory attitude
 - No difficulty was faced
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B- Names of districts where surveys were carried out

S No	District	S No	District
1	Lahore	2	Multan
3	Vehari	4	Faisalabad
5	Rahim Yar Khan	6	Rajanpur
7	Kasur	8	Muzaffargarh
9	Chakwal	10	Bahawalpur
11	Peshawar	12	Nowshera
13	Bannu	14	Mingora/Swat
15	DI Khan	16	Lower Dir
17	Mardan	18	Kohat
19	Karak	20	Mansehra
21	Lasbella	22	Sibbi
23	Noshki	24	Jaffarabad
25	Loralai	26	Nasirabad
27	Quetta	28	Khuzdar
29	Kohlu	30	Mastung
31	Karachi Central	32	Larkana
33	Umerkot	34	Thatta
35	Sanghar	36	Hyderabad
37	Mirpur Khas	38	Dadu
39	Sukkur	40	Karachi West
41	Muzaffarabad	42	Mirpur
43	Gilgit	44	Hunza

UJALA PARTNERS

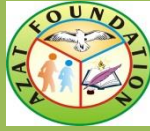
Azad Jammu & Kashmir



Gilgit Baltistan



Balochistan



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Punjab



Sindh



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