

Rape and Culture of Silence in Pakistan

Abstract

The study explores the culture of silence regarding rape in Pakistan over the last decade. The study is qualitative and uses a purposive sampling technique. The data was collected in two forms: first, annual reports from the HRCP of 2013-2023, and second, Dawn News reports from 2013-2023. The system theory of violence and the Gramsci theory of hegemony were used to analyze the data. The results from HRCP reports show a yearly increase in rape cases. The findings further show data discrepancies and missing information, fixing reporting in the next few years and acknowledging data issues. The results from newspaper analysis reveal a yearly increase in reporting of rape cases, crimes alongside rape, language construction in reporting, location of the rape incidents, as well as the identity of victims and perpetrators. The findings also concluded that a lack of correct and consistent data is a limitation for further studies of rape in Pakistan.

Keywords: Culture, Crimes, Hegemony, Rape, Violence, Victims

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan gained independence in 1947 from the British Empire, but the laws left them still hold a firm place in the country's current circumstances regarding violence against women. These laws and systems of oppression from the history of British-ruled Pakistan created a domino effect, which led to more potent indigenous forms of violence that we cannot seem to eradicate anymore. According to the Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum (2022), Pakistan was ranked as the second worst country in the world. Although there is a debate and various questions on such reports, it is still pertinent to notice the journey Pakistan took in the last 75 years to reach here. Similarly, according to a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2021), 11 rape cases are reported every day in Pakistan. To understand these circumstances in Pakistan, this case study will try to determine the factors that have contributed to this prolonged culture of silence about rape in Pakistan. It is not possible to track all these factors and changes in laws throughout the whole history of Pakistan; hence, for the most part, the history of Pakistan and the culture of silence will be explained through a literature review, and only sources from the recent decade will be used as primary and secondary sources to determine the social change that came about. The study is also limited in its understanding of only involving adults, which means all the data laws and literature discussed throughout the study will only pertain to adults. Although such violence is not limited to adults only, to narrow the scope of the study in all respects, the focus is explicitly on adults. This study will be used to help track the culture of silence about rape in Pakistan over the past decade to see if any changes could potentially help reduce rape in the future.

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Significance of Study

The importance of the study is linked to the well-being of adults in Pakistan, as the frequency of violence like rape keeps increasing, and there are no to very few measures being taken to reduce this form of violence. Hence, the overall well-being and productivity of adults is affected. This is affecting the life quality of individuals as they would live in fear of violence.

Research Question

How has the culture of silence changed regarding rape over the last decade in Pakistan?

How do documents (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports) demonstrate this change in the culture of silence regarding rape?

How does the media portray this change in the culture of silence regarding rape?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The culture of silence is not a new concept in the context of rape in the world, but especially not in Pakistan. It is because rape itself silences women for several reasons, most among them being shame and stigma (Aghtaie, 2011). This shame is often strongly associated with some cultures, mainly Muslim or South Asian (Aghtaie, 2011). At the same time, such cultures where sexual violence is the norm and blame for assault is thrown on the victim help create a culture of violence, and inquiring from the public about their actions and behavior during assault traumatizes them (Armstrong & Mahone, 2016). This is potentially another factor that contributes to the culture of silence. Kakon (2020) has argued that this being quiet should not be taken as silence, as people are just trying to avoid the shame and stigma, and that is because sexual assault is not understood by society.

Although the literature is evident on the factors of silence by the people who get raped, it does not give a clear idea of why, as a society, this culture of silence seems to persist despite the enormous adverse effects. Burnett et al. (2009) argue that rape culture encourages silence, and the factors that normalize rape are the ones that work together to create silence. In Pakistan, rape culture consists of hardly any discussions on rape, despite the number of rape cases of crime being committed (Adil, 2021). This can be tracked in two ways, through the history of rape laws in Pakistan and the variety of rape crimes that exist, particularly in Pakistani culture.

As mentioned, the Pakistani legal system was inherited from the British colonial era and was based on Victorian principles. These laws were not very explicit about rape among adults; hence, they did not garner much attention concerning laws being implemented as well. It was when the law of 'The Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance,' 1979, came into force that the laws and punishments about rape and adultery became explicit and harsh. Section 6 of the Ordinance was particularly the worst situation for adult women, as for them to get a conviction of rape, they had to produce four male witnesses to prove their rape case; otherwise, they would be tried under the crime of adultery and punished for it. In 2006, the 'Women Protection Act' replaced the Hudood Ordinance in the Pakistan Penal Code. Section 375 of the Pakistan Penal Code now does not rely on the testimony of four male witnesses to

prove rape but keeps the five conditions for it to be constituted as rape.

In 2016, further amendments were made, and ‘The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offence Relating to Rape) Act 2016 came into force, which made things more straightforward. It also added a restriction on publishing and disclosing the identity of the victim to help with stigma, shame, and many other consequences faced by people for reporting. It also added medical examination as a key part of legal proceedings, which was not a regular legal practice. In 2020 and 2021, laws were amended again in the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, which included more types of rape and harsher punishments. As well as the ‘Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act of 2021, which expanded the definition of rape, speedy trials, special courts, and many other things to change the ever-increasing number of rape reports coming in the last decade. Khaliq (2022) mentioned that even though the current and latest Anti-Rape Act 2021 is the best yet, through which Pakistan's legal system has produced to compensate rape victims, this Act has several substantive and procedural shortcomings, as well as significant challenges in the implementation process. He also shared that issues include the overworked police and prosecution departments' lack of training, the absence of any evidence of the creation of anti-rape crisis cells (ARCCs), the formation of special investigation officers and joint investigation teams without any intention of helping the victim, the severe lack of resources needed to implement the Act, the creation of multiple forums rather than expanding upon the pre-existing legal infrastructure, and the Act's omission of any mention of sexual molestation (Khaliq, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Hegemony (Gramsci)

- Control through perpetuating cultural norms
- Norms created by those who it benefit
- Passed through education, media, religion, social customs
- Unquestioned nature of hegemony



Stigma Theory (Goffman)

Negative behaviour because of particular attributes, situations, characteristics, etc.



Moral Theory (Wikstrom & Treiber)

Violence as a moral act where a certain set of rules are always followed.



Rational Theory (Nagin & Paternoster)

Humans think in terms of costs and benefits when they consider violence



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature. The study uses a purposive sampling technique, and the sampling size consists of annual reports from 2013 to 2023 of the ‘Human Rights Commission Pakistan, which was used for document analysis. Similarly, news from the Dawn newspaper from 2013 to 2023 was available online on the Dawn News website.

Data Collection Methods & Procedures

The data is collected in three ways. Firstly, documents, particularly the annual report of the ‘Human Rights Commission of Pakistan from 2013 to 2023, to see the changes in the last decade. Secondly, newspaper cases, particularly ‘Dawn News’ of Pakistan, a well-known newspaper case, are tracked from 2013 until 2023. Only cases related to adults were included, and cases involving children from either documents or newspapers were not. The keyword ‘Rape’ was used to find it in the newspapers as well as the documents.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using different methods for each research method. For the documents, critical discourse analysis by Van Dijk (1993) was used, where discourses were analyzed after converting the data into different themes and were analyzed on how language use exposes different power dynamics and cultural factors that contribute to a culture of silence regarding rape. The documents were around 3300 pages, and only chapters and pages about topics of rape were used. The data from these pages was later converted into tables and graphs to give a holistic understanding. Themes were also created by analyzing the data on those pages through discourse analysis. The topics of rape that were analyzed were only about adults, and data on children was not included in the study. For the newspaper, a list of all news available online from 2013 regarding rape was made. That list was later translated into a table, and half of the reports from each year were analyzed. The codes were made from the news content and later categorized and made into themes for this case study. All the news considered was about rape in cases involving adults. No data on minors or children was used in this study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results were divided into two parts, according to the subdivision of the research questions. The first is a document analysis of the Human Rights Commission Report of Pakistan (HRCP) report, and the second is a content analysis of the Dawn newspaper.

Part A - Document Analysis

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is an independent, non-political, not-for-profit organization established in 1986 and is committed to highlighting human rights for all citizens. They believe that the goal of fundamental human rights under the Pakistani constitution should be without any discrimination based on gender, race, religion, sect, ethnicity, disability, economic status, or marginalization. To fulfil this purpose, publish an annual report on various topics, particularly the ‘State of Human Rights,’ which includes detailed documentation of the country’s state of human rights. For this study, all the annual report data for rape from their reports have been taken, as they are one of the only documents right now in Pakistan with such a detailed account of rape cases.

Following are the tables that are compiled given the data from HRCP reports. The missing places are the data that was also unavailable in the reports.

Table 1:
Province Wise Yearly Rape Cases (As per HRCP Reports)

| Provinces | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Punjab | 3656 | 4329 | 3773 | 3881 | 3300 | 2608 | 2942 | 2737 | 2734 | 2576 |
| Sindh | 140 | 217 | 344 | 95 | | 156 | 165 | | 191 | |
| KPK | 277 | 370 | 278 | 172 | 72 | 72 | 163 | | 133 | 127 |
| Baluchistan | 40 | 30 | 39 | | | 4 | 5 | | 19 | 32 |
| ICT | 60 | 49 | 46 | 487 | | | | | 162 | |
| AJK | 21 | 14 | 4 | 9 | | | | | | |
| GB | 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 4 | |

KPK=Kyber Pakhtun Khwa, ICT=Islamabad Capital Territory, AJK=Azad Jammu Kashmir, GB=Gilgit Baltistan

The table illustrates the annual rise in rape case reports, particularly in the province of Punjab. However, in 2022, there was an abrupt and significant decline in reported cases. This is presumably caused by confusion over the new Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act of 2021. The blank areas show that nothing has been reported for those years and areas in the reports.

Table 2:
Province Wise Yearly Gang Rape Cases (As per HRCP Reports)

| Provinces | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Punjab | 311 | 269 | 219 | 190 | 151 | 156 | | 223 | 263 | 32 |
| Sindh | 9 | 13 | 54 | 7 | | | 13 | | 35 | 27 |
| KPK | 2 | 0 | | | | | 1 | | 11 | 3 |
| Baluchistan | 0 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | |
| ICT | 5 | 1 | 5 | | | | | | 17 | |
| AJK | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| GB | 0 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | |

The table indicates an upward tendency, particularly in the Punjab province, because of increased public knowledge of rape crimes relative to other regions where there have been no reported occurrences in recent years. The blank areas show that nothing has been reported for those years and areas in the reports.

Following were the themes from the data from reports from 2013-2023 of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Theme 1: Discrepancies in information

There have been various discrepancies in different reports over the year. One example of that is from the report of 2014 (HRCP, 2015), where on different pages and parts of the report, the number of rapes and gang rapes overall and for each province is different. On page 23, it mentions 828 rapes and 597 gang rapes, and later, for each province, it mentions figures like 2734, etc. The more common statistics are mentioned again in the report under another different heading, which might lead people to believe that they may be true. In the report of 2014 (HRCP, 2015), it says in the 'Highlight' part of the report under the heading of 'Women',

'According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in 2014: 597 women and girls were gang-raped; 828 rapes....' (p. 23).

In the same report, under the heading Crimes against People and Property, it is said,

'Some 326 gang-rape cases were also reported in the country, including 263 in Punjab, 35 in Sindh, 11 in KP, and 17 in Islamabad, according to the official crime figures in 2014. As many as 3,243 rape cases were reported — 2,734 in Punjab, 191 in Sindh, 133 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 19 in Baluchistan, 162 in Islamabad, and four in Gilgit-Baltistan.' (p. 75 & 241). Even when they talk about minor girl rape, the numbers are different. Although this study was excluded to check if it was not a mistake on the researcher's part, it was confirmed by other statistics on rape as well throughout the report. According to the HRCP database, 290 minor girls were raped, and 139 gang members were raped during 2014.

The discrepancies continue each year when they try to fix or rewrite the last year's report mistake. For example, the report for the year 2017 (HRCP, 2018) is written about 2016 for KPK.

'In comparison, in the previous year, there were 211 murders, 44 'honor' killings, 163 rapes, and one gang-rape incident, besides 24 cases of domestic violence and one acid attack.' (p. 68)

While in the 2016 report (HRCP, 2017), it is mentioned,

'In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police registered 2472 murder, 148 rape...' (p. 48)

Another major discrepancy is that the number of rape cases reported for the capital city, Islamabad, on pages 216 and 225 were different. The wording was also different from assuming that one is reported by police, and they compile another. Still, then it also states that police completed 70 cases while previously only mentioning 35 cases being reported.

'According to data obtained from the Islamabad police through a Right to Information request by the Sustainable Social Development Organisation (SSDO), the number of cases of violence against women (VAW) in the capital increased from 79 in 2018 to 109 in 2019—43 VAW cases, 31 cases of kidnapping, and 35 cases of rape.' (p. 240)

‘According to their statistics, the police had traced 23 out of 97 murder cases. Of a total of 186 incidents of attempted murder, the police had submitted challans in 93 cases.

In the capital, 487 incidents of rape took place, but the police completed investigation in 70 cases.’ (p. 225)

These persistent discrepancies in reported rape cases underline concerning pattern of inconsistencies that raise concerns over the efficacy of data collection and reporting methods in addressing the seriousness of crimes against women.

Theme 2: Missing and combined information

Throughout the last decade, there has been a trend of missing information on rape data. Sometimes it is ignored, and sometimes it feels intentional. For example, in the report of 2015, only a total of 244 overall cases of rape were mentioned. It was also made through reference to the Ministry of Human Rights. Every other time rape is mentioned, it is generalized with statistics of violence of different kinds. There is also no information on specific places in Pakistan. At the same time, they also mention a report by War Against Rape (WAR), which mentioned that four women are raped every day. Both reports are contradictory and are not directly linked with HRCP. Still, they did not clarify any of their data on the report and just stated two conflicting reports by different organizations for this year.

Similarly, in the report of 2016 (HRCP, 2017), the generalized information in most provinces is there about violence, but specific to rape is only mentioned for Punjab, KPK, and one gang rape in GB.

Theme 3: Ignoring missed information

Starting from the 2013 (HRCP, 2014) report, one can see that attention to the part about rape is not efficient. There is a lack of data regarding many areas in Pakistan. Even if the areas are mentioned, such as Sindh, many other crimes and violence are discussed, except rape. One could argue there is no rape, but it would be difficult to believe as the nearby province of Punjab had 2576 reported rape cases. As well, in a later part of the report, it is mentioned that there were 27 gang rapes in Sindh, which should have at least been mentioned in discussion with other parts. It seems as if that information is ignored or missed intentionally or accidentally. This can be seen from this excerpt from the 2013 report.

‘According to Punjab police crime statistics, 2,576 cases of rape of women were registered in that province alone in 2013. According to official crime statistics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 127 cases of rape and three cases of gang- rape were registered. In Sindh, 27 cases of gang rape were reported.’ (p.192)

In conclusion, there appears to be a serious lack of emphasis and uneven reporting on rape cases, which raises concerns about the quality and openness of data presented and shows a large gap in the dependability of the data used to comprehend sexual violence in Pakistan.

Theme 4: Fixing reporting in next year

There is also a trend toward fixing reports next year, specifically regarding numbers. In the report for the year 2015 (HRCP, 2016), they did not mention any specific province and only gave an estimate of the total. The next year's report came with a specific number for Punjab, which was not present in last year's report. Similarly, the statistics of rape in the 2016 year were mentioned in the 2017 report (HRCP, 2018).

'In 2016, rural Sindh had witnessed 100 incidents of 'honor' killing, 165 rapes, 13 gang rapes, five acid attacks, and six forced marriages, while the total number of crimes against women was 2,817...' (p. 68)

It also happened by KPK, as written in the report of 2017 (HRCP, 2018), statistics of 2016,

'In comparison, in the previous year, there were 211 murders, 44 'honour' killings, 163 rapes, and one gang-rape incident, besides 24 cases of domestic violence and one acid attack.' (p. 68).

As well as for Baluchistan

'The previous year, the province had seen 371 crimes against women, including 43 murders, 31 'honor' killings, five rapes, and one gang-rape.' (p. 68)

As shown in the cases of provinces like Punjab, KPK, and Baluchistan, the trend of revisions and adding more detailed data in succeeding reports is consistent and reflects an attempt to rectify past reporting problems and enhance accuracy and transparency.

Theme 5: Acknowledging data issues

It was only in the 2018 report that HRCP acknowledged that the data reported was not entirely correct but estimation and shared their estimation of the number and their struggles regarding it. On this page, they shared the numbers of rape 3238 and gang rape 257.

'The following categories and types of VAWG data used to be collected independently by the national NGO, Aurat Foundation, which was widely used as a credible source. This data is no longer being compiled. As a result, collecting and compiling this data proved immensely challenging. It is presented here with the caveat that it depicts only the incidents reported by the provincial police/LEAs to the federal government at the end of 2017.' (p. 184)

They were also able to correctly anticipate next year as the report of 2018 (HRCP, 2019) only had data regarding Punjab and KPK rape. All the other data they mentioned came from newspaper articles and TV channels. The Punjab Foundation provided the Aurat data only until September 2018.

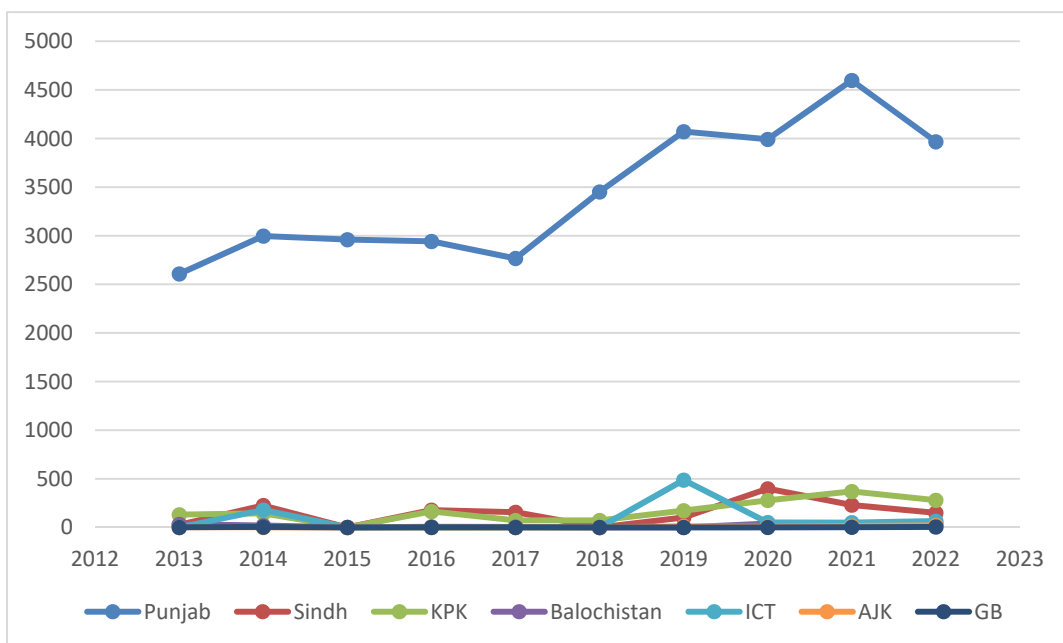
The following table shows the data compiled during research to put it together for holistic and visual understanding.

Table 3:
Province Wise Yearly Combined Data from HRCP Reports

| Province | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Punjab | 2608 | 2997 | 2960 | 2942 | 2767 | 3451 | 4071 | 3992 | 4598 | 3967 |
| Sindh | 27 | 226 | 0 | 178 | 156 | 0 | 102 | 398 | 230 | 149 |
| KPK | 130 | 144 | 0 | 164 | 72 | 72 | 172 | 278 | 370 | 279 |
| Baluchistan | 32 | 19 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 31 | 40 |
| ICT | 0 | 179 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 487 | 51 | 50 | 65 |
| AJK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 6 | 15 | 21 |
| GB | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |

The yearly combined data from HRCP reports for Punjab (2013–2022) shows erratic trends, peaking in incidents in 2017 and 2018. While recent years have shown a decline, the overall number of cases has increased from 2608 in 2013 to 3967 in 2022, indicating the need for additional research into the factors that contribute to these incidents.

Figure 1:
Data over the last decade in different parts of Pakistan



The above graph also shows a trend where Punjab is being highlighted with only a consistent source of information and the only major decline in 2022, which could be attributed to the

Anti-Rape Act (2021) and lack of awareness surrounding it. Apart from Punjab, there is a lack of consistent data reporting to take away any trend, and the main thing to take away is only the lack of focus and information that exists, which shows the institution's lack of care about issues such as rape.

Part B - Newspaper Analysis (Dawn News)

Dawn News is published by Dawn Media Group, a Pakistani media company based in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. It is the oldest English-language newspaper and one of the most popular news outlets in Pakistan, as well as various other magazines, broadcast media, and internet media. It is used in this study because of its popularity and because the medium is English.

Table 4:

Yearly Rape Reported Cases & Sample Case Analysis

| Years | Reported News (Dawn) | Sample Case Analysis |
|-------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2013 | 2 | 1 |
| 2014 | 12 | 6 |
| 2015 | 8 | 4 |
| 2016 | 5 | 2 |
| 2017 | 2 | 1 |
| 2018 | 14 | 7 |
| 2019 | 14 | 7 |
| 2020 | 10 | 5 |
| 2021 | 20 | 10 |
| 2022 | 24 | 12 |
| Total | 111 | 55 |

The following themes were compiled from the newspaper analysis.

Theme 6: Crimes alongside Rape

There is a common theme among the media news that various crimes are being reported when rape is discussed. Almost all news reports regarding rape either start with physically assaulting the person or during or after physically assaulting them to the extent of it being considered attempted murder. In recent years, instances of intimidation or threat have also been used for rape, such as at gunpoint. Although the intention of hurting before was mostly to physically disable the person for some time, in more cases, it is reported that women are either thrown, assaulted physically, or born to assault with the intent to kill them. Over 8 cases also shared the kidnapping or abduction of women with rape. The use of drugs has become more prominent in recent years in the news as well. Over 10 cases reported different instances of different types of torture, from fire to weapons to cutting tongues, with reports of rape. There were also various reports of threats of consequences or threats of death with rape to multiple women. It also included some instances of blackmail for keeping quiet and some

threats of consequences for not adhering to it. In recent years, there have also been reports of recording or taking pictures of the person being raped for blackmail or other threats. Over 9 cases were reported for murder, which ended with the victim being killed either right after the rape or succumbing to their injuries after a few days in the hospital.

‘After allegedly raping the girl, the police constable threw her down from a hilltop.’ (June 11, 2014)

Theme 7: Rape and its types

As all the cases were of rape, the word rape was used in all the reports. While few types of rape were mentioned more frequently than others, over 10 times, gang rape was mentioned in the reports. Comparatively, the reports of revenge rape, custodial rape, statutory rape, Panchayat that is a group of elder and wise people chosen by the local community for the resolution of family disputes, and ordered rape were relatively few (Rajamanickam, 2016; Eidson, 1980). Attempted rape was mentioned only twice in the news that was analyzed. At the same time, there were instances of rape during surgery that were not categorized with other rapes and were reported shockingly. Similarly, Panchayat-ordered rape was reported in such a manner that it seemed unique, as the law has banned these types of rape cases, but they are still existing in some areas.

‘A woman was allegedly gang-raped by four people on Monday’ (Nov 23, 2021)

Theme 8: Construction of language in media

The language used by the newspaper reports for people raped was mainly represented as they were victims, depicting the individuals as helpless and subjected to harm, as seen in over 14 news reports, even if the person is alive and in legal process. There was hardly any other word used for people who were raped. Gender was the only common theme among all the news that was reported. The words such as ‘Alleged rape’ were also used commonly in many reports, as many as six times. There was also a trend of legal or medical terms in the news from words like ‘FIR Registered,’ ‘Registered Case,’ ‘Arrested,’ and ‘DNA Reports.’ There was also an everyday use of the words ‘Suspects,’ ‘Accused,’ and ‘Allegation’ in all the reports. In the cases of using the word allegedly or allegation mentioned in the report, the cases were still open and not completed by the police. At the same time, the structure of language and sentences is always focused on the victim and not the one who committed the crime.

‘The victim alleged that she was raped by the government officer in a hostel’ (July 15, 2021)

Theme 9: Identity of victims, perpetrators, and their families

The names of the accused, victims, survivors, and their families mainly were kept from the news. Apart from a few news reports that were heavily reported or were cases of murder, names were not mentioned. The only things identifying people were their locations, their relationship to each other (if any), and the age of the victims (for the most part). There was also a pattern of giving an alphabet, such as A, B, etc, to the person referred to in some reports. In some circumstances, marital status is also mentioned. As well as employment

status, it is mentioned if the employment place creates a link with the rapist.

‘She said at the house, both ‘H’ and ‘J’ raped her in the presence of their friend, and the suspects made a video clip of the crime.’ (September 6, 2017)

The themes in the above part are all correlated. Every news contains more than one element of the themes mentioned above, which we can conclude as a pattern of how this news is written.

This discussion tries to answer the question raised in this research that surrounds the case study as well as the theoretical framework and literature if the culture of silence has changed regarding rape over the last decade in Pakistan. Two different types of data gave an insight into this culture of silence. Burnett and his colleagues (2009) argue that rape culture encourages silence, and the factors that normalize rape are the ones that work together to create silence. Before the discussion, it is noted that this data does not have a holistic understanding and represents certain people, reports, and news interpreted in this study.

Given that the first data that was to be analyzed was the HRCP reports of the last decade, The reason those reports were chosen is that these were the only official reports in Pakistan that have the most accurate statistics of rape in Pakistan. There were no official government documents that compile such data on rape, which shows the government's priority and stance on this culture of silence. Hence, gathering this data from independent organizations spread all over Pakistan is a step toward understanding this culture. At the same time, when we look at the best version of data available in Pakistan regarding rape, it is seen that it is incomplete, not comprehensive, and has some errors. It is to be believed then that nobody in Pakistan, as of this point, has realistic data gathered on rape that has been reported. It is not to include the many unreported cases, an issue worldwide. Understanding this, we can see the way Gramsci's hegemony (1995) is working in Pakistani culture for rape, and this silence exists at various institutional levels. It was also discussed by Adil (2021) in his study that rape is not a topic of discussion in daily life, and even media reports do not discuss rape as a routine point of discussion. This is also evident from the government's inability to collect or ask for data, police ineffectiveness, and the helplessness of independent organizations. The silence is so deeply rooted that no organization or institution can help break it. At the same time, given the data we have, we can see there is no decline in the number of rapes that are reported, which has been entered into the reports database. Either it is static because of the lack of data, or it is increasing, but there is no decline. Georg (2003) explains that violence is repetitive and, therefore, a social process. This could potentially argue for rape cases not declining even after years, and it has become part of our culture now. But this trend is particular in one province where data has always been available over the last decade, unlike all the other areas of Pakistan. It can be assumed that similar patterns exist in different parts of Pakistan. Still, the reason for the silence, or particularly the lack of data in those spaces, is a question that has yet to be answered.

The newspaper analysis gave two hypotheses regarding the silence. According to most of the reports in the newspaper, it is seen that there is a pattern of crimes overlapping whenever rape has happened. For example, blackmail, torture, and attempts to murder are frequently

mentioned in rape news reports. This can lead people to believe that reporting is not just about telling what has happened but rather a constant fear for the future, which could lead to the silence of survivors. While the cases of murder with rape make it impossible, over the years, murder has become a part of rape culture in some circumstances. The shame, stigma, and avoiding shame because of rape is attached in Pakistan, which is supported by the studies (Aghtaie, 2011; Kakon, 2020). Furthermore, this shame can be explained by not speaking, even if one understands that rape is a crime. This also explains cultural practices like Panchayat rape, which is deliberately done and ordered by village elders if the family does not conform to the norms of the system, and raping women of the family, which takes away their reputation and brings shame associated with it. Aghtaie (2011) mentioned that the shame of rape is mainly related to Muslim or South Asian culture.

The cultural and country contexts require a solution that is not only long-term but works short-term for the current climate as well. Although the history of the laws of rape in Pakistan gives some hope regarding the change that has occurred over the last fifty years, it is still not enough to see a drastic change. The themes of the results from experts indicated that even though they think the recent laws of the Anti-Rape Act (2021), as well as amendments to the Women Protection Act (2006), have made some strides in breaking the cycle, the lack of implementation of these laws is still a factor towards silence. Specifically, the law that was made to prompt the cases of rape still struggles with the system in itself; hence, despite having a law that mandates courts to have a ruling, it does not always happen. Similarly, the breakthrough of recent laws that prohibit bringing the sexual history of women into the context of rape is a revolution in the context of the shame and stigma attached to rape, as well as the questioning of the character of women who do come forward. Even though the cultural practices still exist, the law makes it harder for such things to be used against women in court.

Adult education can play an influential role in both elements by including families (which will have older adults) in this conversation about reducing shame around rape as well as starting conversations about masculinity and violence through various formal and informal forms with men in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The case of the culture of silence regarding rape is not a specific issue that exists in Pakistan. It exists on different levels because of the cultural layers of Pakistan. As the cultures within Pakistan also vary, the change in this culture can be seen differently in other parts of Pakistan. Various theories of violence and culture explain the silence of rape, and it has tried to bridge those gaps with the data available in Pakistan and the theoretical understanding of violence, specifically rape. Despite the variety of data sources, there exists a unifying theme. The culture of silence regarding rape is a real phenomenon that exists currently in Pakistan. The repercussions of this silence are not only for the people living in Pakistan right now, but they will also be for future generations, as the implications of our last decades can be seen in our culture right now.

The secondary data of this study come together to showcase the geographical and political places where the change has occurred. While some areas of Pakistan have experienced less

change compared to others, it is evident that there has been a trend of silence in those regions over the past decade. This shift indicates that change is not always positive. The situation could deteriorate further if governments and society continue to overlook these issues.

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