

Disarming Domestic Violence

A survey on

Proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW)



Conducted BY



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International Action Network against Small Arms

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Domestic violence is considered a complicated human rights issue due to varying legal remedies for women by nation, the extent to which they have support or opportunities to divorce their husbands, cultural stigma to hide evidence of abuse, and inability to have abuse recognized by police or the judicial system.

In conservative communities, women are often considered inferior to their husbands, possibly controlled or oppressed, and lacking opportunities that would give them their own personal sense of identity, all of which adds to the complicated nature of unearthing and obtaining remedies for domestic violence. The best solutions for stemming the tide of domestic violence is through national and international laws and human rights pressure, addressing the ability for women's rights to be asserted and offending men to be prosecuted.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition, domestic violence is: "the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another; also: a repeated or habitual pattern of such behavior."^[2] Coomarswamy defines domestic violence as "violence that occurs within the private sphere, generally between individuals who are related through intimacy, blood or law...[It is] nearly always a gender-specific crime, perpetrated by men against women." It is used as a strong form of control and oppression.^[3]

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) (DEVAW). This landmark document was a result of efforts within the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). While DEVAW does not have the binding legal authority of a convention or treaty, as a United Nations General Assembly declaration, it is universal in coverage and a strong statement of principle to the international community. Identifying the subordination of women as a principle cause of domestic violence, DEVAW states, "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men." DEVAW condemns the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position as compared with men" and defines violence as that occurring both in "private or public life." Importantly, DEVAW provides specific steps member states should take to combat domestic violence, including legal system reform. DEVAW provides that states should investigate and punish acts of domestic violence, develop comprehensive legal, political, administrative and cultural programs to prevent violence against women, provide training to law enforcement officials and promote research and collect statistics relating to the prevalence of domestic violence.

² [^ Domestic Violence](#). Merriam Webster. Retrieved 14 Nov. 2011.

In domestic violence gun violence is alarmingly high . Perhaps most shockingly, the greatest risk of gun violence to women around the world is not on the streets, or the battlefield, but in their own homes. Women are three times more likely to die violently if there is a gun in the house. Usually the perpetrator is a spouse or partner, often with a prior record of domestic abuse. Gun violence can be part of the cycle of intimidation and aggression that many women experience from an intimate partner. For every woman killed or physically injured by firearms, many more are threatened. This is why IANSA has launched a campaign in 2009 , to demand policies which would keep women safe from gun violence. Awaz CDS being the member of this network has taken initiative to conduct survey to strongly support the need for effective firearm control. IANSA is a global movement against gun violence- a network of 800 civil society organizations, working in 120 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapon (SALW). IANSA seeks to make people safer from gun violence by securing stronger regulations on guns in society and better control on arms export. It represents the voices of civil society on the international stage for example in the UN process on small arms, and draws on the practical experience of its members to campaign for policies that will protect human security.

In the same loop of activities IANSA has organized a global week of action focusing mainly on 'Disarming Domestic Violence '. This theme particularly focused the women who have to bear small arms violence at home. Regarding this we have disseminated 100 questionnaires among the likeminded civil society organizations and people awareness and rights committees and in five district of South Punjab i.e Multan, Muzafargarh, DG Khan and Rajanpur. Due to sensitive nature of the issue we could only receive 64 filled questionnaires. This reveals a marked increase in the instability of the lives of the Pakistani women added pressures they are subjected to on a daily basis.

2.Objectives and Methodology

This chapter illustrates process that led to the study and also explains the FGDs' questionnaires and provides a description of the sample (participants who participated in the discussions and answered the questionnaire); data gathering methods (discussion of the content of the questionnaire and strategies for collecting the data); procedures (administration of questionnaire,); analysis and interpretation of the data.

2.1 Objectives

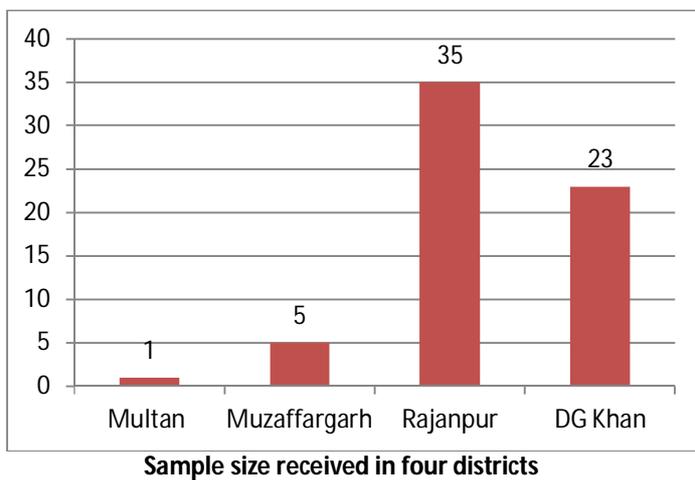
The study was conducted under following core objectives

- Identification of number of women affected by small arms .
- Verification of incidents of gun violence against women , working in collaboration with local women organizations and women shelter homes.
- Identification of practice/ perception of police in cases of violence against women with gun.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.2 Selection of the Universe and Sample Size

The study was conducted in District Multan, Muzaffargarh, Jampur and DG Khan.Total 100 questionnaire were disseminated in four districts but due to sensitivity of the topic we could receive only 64 filled samples.



2.2.3 Age group of females

Average age of the females who filled questionnaire and participated in FGDs was from 20-45 years .Majority of the respondents belong to conservative background but at the same time some percentage of females was educated .

2.3 Admintration of the research tool

2.3.1 Quantitative Data Collection

The questionnaire was translated into Urdu and was channeled through People awareness and rights committees' network in the targeted districts. The questionnaire was aimed at gathering specific views/perception and experiences of the women about this practice prevailing in the society. These responses gave us quantifiable results.

2.3.2.1 Focus Group Discussion FGDs

Further to this for strengthening and verifying the analysis focus group discussions were carried out with different resource persons , stakeholders, representatives of govt.institutions (Women Shelter Homes , Police stations and Bar Associates) . During FGDs the discussion and data provided by the representatives of different institues helped us in comparison of crimes regarding gun violance against women in last three years and understanding the reasons behind its increasing trends.These comprehensive responses facilitated us in scripting qualitative results.

2.3.2.2 Indepth Interviews

FGDs provided a quantitative and qualitative insight on the subject matter which then further verified through in-depth interviews with a range of experts from civil society of District Multan, Muzafargarh , Jampur and DG.Khan.

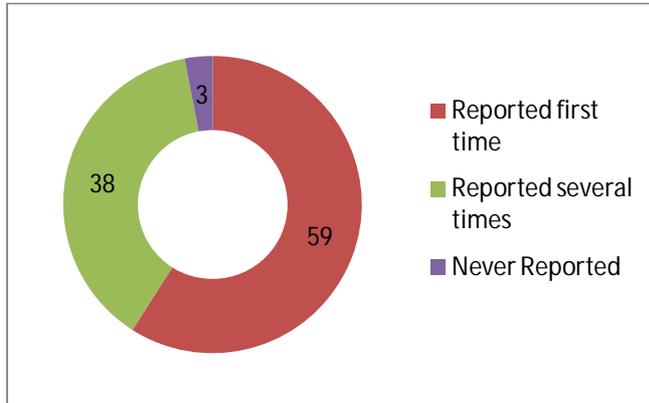
3. Results and Discussions

This chapter describes the major findings of the study. Initially the perceptions and experiences of women were focused in the light of questionnaire. The rest of the part highlights the facts and figures that we have received from the concerned departments which directly strengthen and identify the extent of gun violence against women and also identify the latent delinquents. Last part of the chapter identifies factors behind such kind of violence and gives base to recommendations obtained through FGDs and verified during the in-depth interviews.

3.1 Reporting trend (Gun Violence against women)

Total 72 females from four districts responded this question and 59%females shared that they have reported first time and before this they tried to bear all violence silently. Whereas 38% told that they have gone several times to the police station but never got positive response from them. But it is tragic

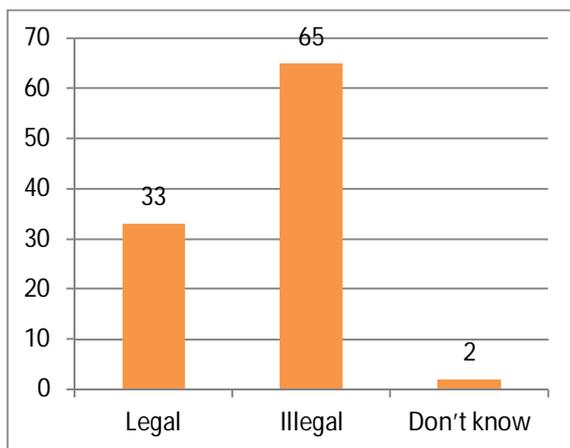
that 3% of the females never find it important to report because along with the resistance of police in filing their reports and misinterpreting their statements, it is general perception to condone domestic violence as a social custom and considered as a private family matter.



Percentage of reporting trend of gun violence cases

3.2 Perpetrators posses’ legal or illegal gun

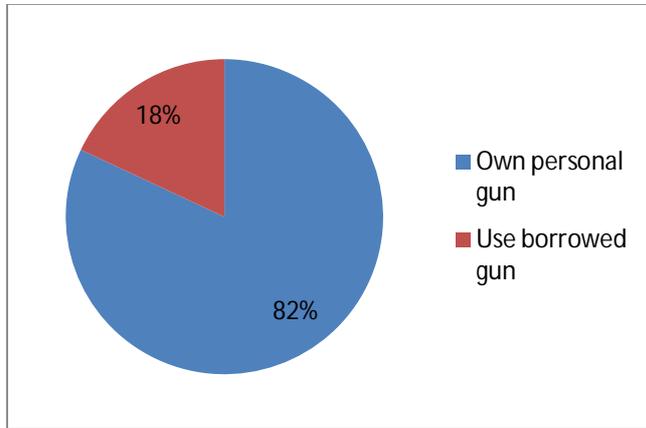
Possession of legal or illegal gun at home is also an important point to discuss. Our data analysis shows that 65% women reported presence of illegal guns at home whereas; only 33% responded as their men keep licensed guns and only 2% simply don’t know about this . During FGDs majority of women shared that men who possess illegal guns mostly use it for illegal purposes and mercifully women has to face violence with gun as she is considered weak and submissive ,who cannot stand against such acts as for them life of husband or brother is very precious. In other words women are confined to bear all suffering willingly or unwillingly.



Percentage of presence of legal or illegal guns

On asking a sub-question about ownership of guns we analysed that 82% women reported that men possess their own guns either legal or illegal, whereas 18 % shared that perpetrators don’t possess their

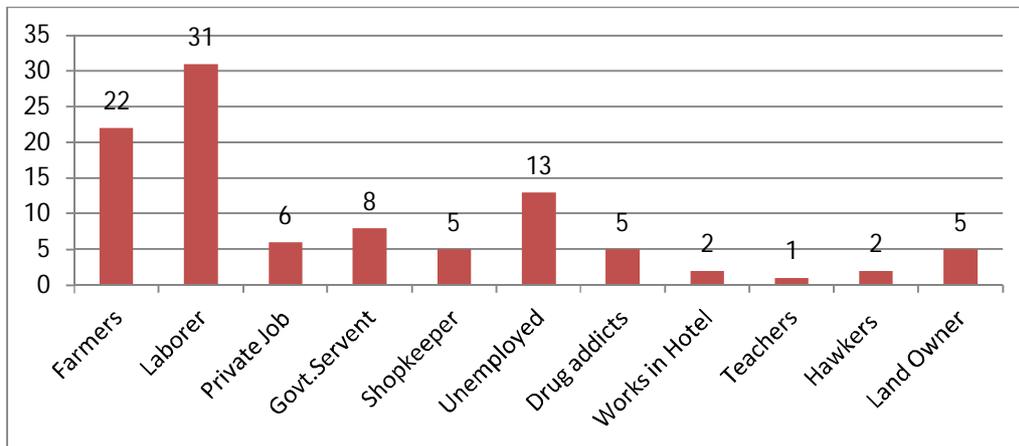
own guns but has an easy access to it . They can easily borrow it from their neighbour, friend or any relative.



Percentage of possession of own or borrowed guns

3.3 Common professional categories of perpetrators

Analysis of variance shows that farmers and labourers are most commonly involved in gun violence. Out of total 31% percent reported to be farmers and 22 percent were labourers.13 % men were those who are unemployed and jobless. During an in-depth interview, a field researcher shared that most common reason for this high percentage is illiteracy and ignorance to the rights of women. It has become a common perception that women is weak and feeble and men in order to get rid of their frustration influence the women in the form of domestic violence.

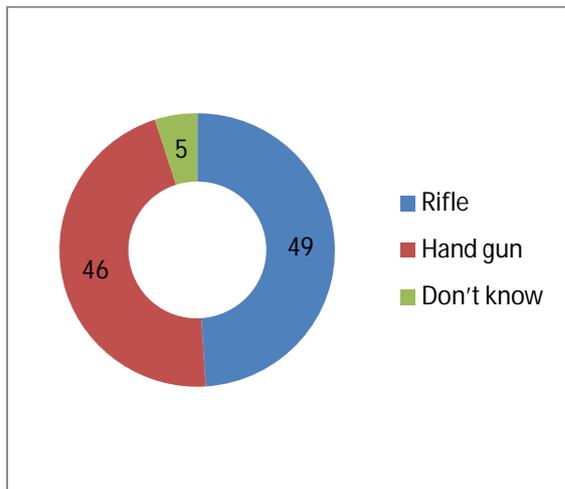


Percentage of categories of perpetrators

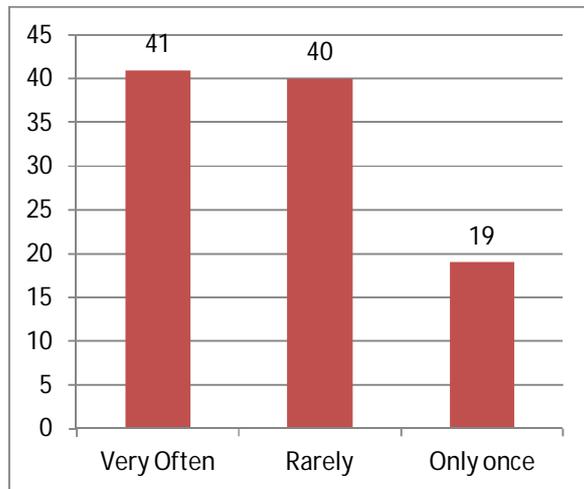
3.4 Categories of small arms used in house.

During FGDs we come to know that it has become a common trend to keep gun at home. Total 78 percent participants reported the presence of gun at home whereas, 19% said there is no gun at home

and 3 percent are not aware of presence of gun at home. In the same realm on discussing about the type of gun 49% participants in Focus group discussion shared that they possess rifle at home and 46% shared that they possess hand gun. For in-depth analysis of the fact of use of gun for threatening women a sub-question was asked that how many times a perpetrator has used a gun to threaten the women. About 41 percent participants shared that men very often use gun to threaten the women, whereas, 40 percent said that rarely their husbands threaten them with gun and 19 percent reported that only once they are threaten with gun. During an in-depth interview a doctor discussed that in most of the cases butt plate of rifle is used for beating and whipping the women.



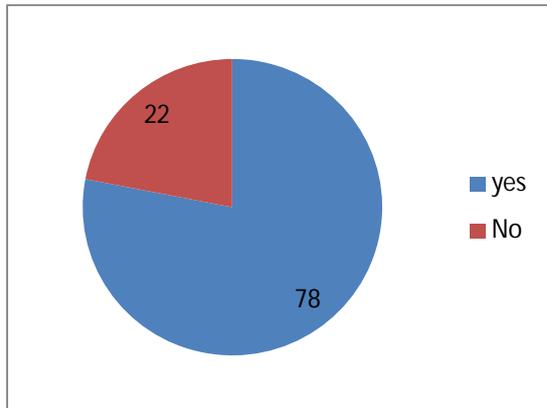
Percentage type of gun used at home



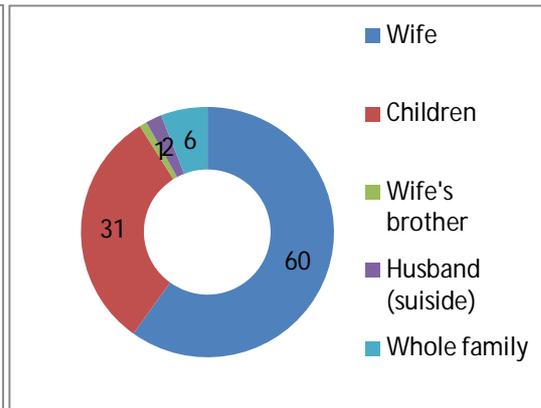
Percentage of use of gun for threatening women

3.5 Information of presence of gun to the children or other family members:

Data Analysis shows that almost 78 percent participants agreed that their children and other family members are aware of presence of gun at home whereas, in 22 % homes gun is kept hidden so that children and other family members don't know about this. During in-depth interview--- shared that thus it strongly builds that in this way almost 78 percent children are vulnerable to accidental cases due to small arms. It is generally read in newspapers about the killing of any sibling accidentally while playing with a gun.



% of family members known about presence of gun at home

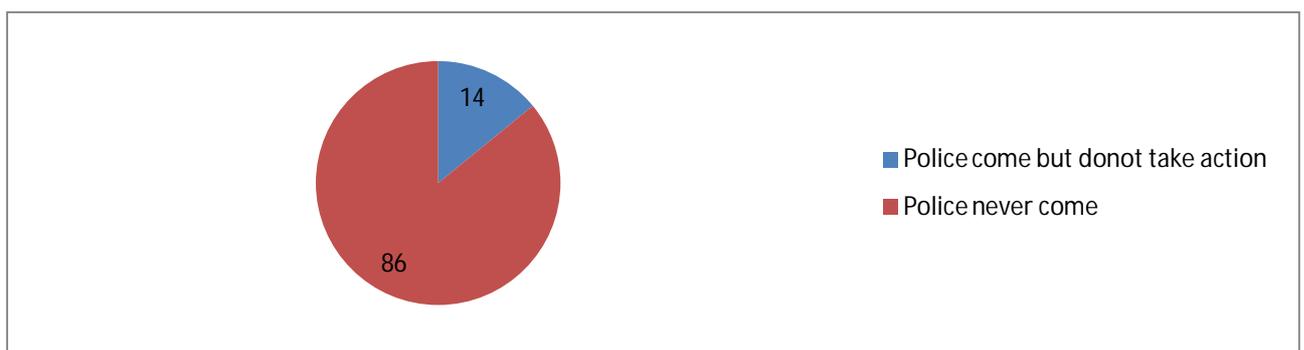


% of supposed effectees with gun

In the same context when it was asked that who is at most threat with the presence of gun at home, 60 % of participants shared that wives are more vulnerable to such cases, 31 percent were of the point of view that children are at danger due to unsafe use of gun whereas, only 1percent is the ratio of participants who showed threat for wife’s brother. During FGDs two percent of the participants showed concern for cases like suicide of husband in frustration whereas, only 6 percent of the participants shared that other family members are also at threat to some extent.

3.8 Response of police on complaint against presence of gun at home

When asked from the participants about the response of police in cases of gun violence against women 86 percent of the respondents shared that police did not come even for once. The basic reason behind this is police consider such cases as personal matter of homes so they don’t interfere in it. Ultimately, this act of police brings harsh consequences for women because men did not get punishment for doing such crimes rather they feel privileged as no one is there to stop them; and they are the owners of women’s life.



Percentage of response of police on presence of gun at home

4. Findings

- 65 % illegal firearms are being used for violence against women.
- Farmers and labourers are more involved in such crimes because of illiteracy.
- 94% perpetrators directly use guns to threaten their wives, which is alarming.
- 49% rifles are used not only for threatening the women but also for beating and whipping them at home.
- In 86% cases, police don't pursue such cases considering it as private matters.

5. Conclusion

This research study is unique of its kind although much work has been done on women violence but study on women violence focussing firearm/gun violence is exceptional. Due to constraint of recourses we could only rely on quantitative data which is further strengthened by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. We found few facts as women don't have access to legal institutions which may be considered as a basic reason for unregistered cases. Along with this police department are not properly equipped both technically and in legal terms that they could maintain and properly file the crime data. Women shelter homes needs special attention of government in order to provide them with better legal aid and living facilities. People have some of reservations about these matters because of the fear of defamation of the dignity and honour of their family, that is why they hesitate to share such cases openly.

6. Recommendations:

- Government, Local authorities, armed groups, and political, community and religious leaders should publicly denounce violence against women whenever and wherever it occurs. They should make it clear that such violence is a violation of women's human rights and will not be tolerated.
- Government should ensure that violence against women is prohibited not only in national law but in international law as well.
- There should be strict criteria for the issuance of license for firearms so that it may not be easy for anyone to have a gun
- Government should treat domestic violence as a serious crime on a par with assaults in other contexts, and in a way that protects and supports women who report it.

- Governments and local authorities, in partnership with civil society and police, should develop participatory community safety programmes that promote practical ways of halting the violence arising from the proliferation and misuse of guns and address its specific impact on women and girls

Annexure 1

Questionnaire

- 1 Is this the first time she has reported domestic violence
- 2 Does the perpetrator have access to or own a gun?
3. Does the perpetrator possess legal or illegal gun?
4. What is the profession of perpetrator?
5. Is someone she thinks is at risk from the gun?
6. Does she think that the children are aware that he has a gun?
7. What type of gun is mostly found at home?
8. How many times has the perpetrator used a gun to threaten her?

Annexure 2

Table 1

Reporting Trend	
Reported first time	59
Reported several times	38
Never Reported	3

Table 2

Possess legal or illegal Gun	
Legal	33
Illegal	65
Don't know	2

Table 3

Ownership of Gun	
Own personal gun	82%

Use borrowed gun	18%
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Table 4

Common Categories of perpetrators	
Farmers	22
Laborer	31
Private Job	6
Govt.Servent	8
Shopkeeper	5
Unemployed	13
Drug addicts	5
Works in Hotel	2
Teachers	1
Hawkers	2
Land Owner	5

Table 5

Presence of gun at home	
yes	78
No	22

Table 6

Who is at threat with presence of gun at home	
Wife	60
Children	31
Wife's brother	1
Husband (suiside)	2
Whole family	6

Table 7

Type of gun at home	
Rifle	49
Hand gun	46
Don't know	5

Table 8

Response of police on complaint against presence of gun at home	
Police come but donot take action	14
Police never come	86

Table 9

How often men use guns to threaten their women	
Very Often	41
Rarely	40
Only once	19

Table 10

Sample recived from four districts	
Multan	1
Muzaffargarh	5
Rajanpur	35
DG Khan	23