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Psycho-emotional and economic resilience: A case study of the widows of the Christian male victims of suicide attacks on Roman Catholic and Christ Churches in Youhanabad, Lahore

Author: Tehmina Aslam

Affiliation: University Of Lahore, School of Integrated Science

Address: 1-Km Defence Road, near Bhuptian Chowk, Lahore, Punjab

Contact: taranjhapak1@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2108-1682>

Abstract:

Aim of this study was to examine the psycho-emotional and economic resilience of the widows of the Christians male victims of the suicide attacks on Roman Catholic and Christ churches in Youhanabad Lahore. A qualitative case study was conducted of the widows of to understand how they recovered from the loss. The study exuded that how the widows recovered from the loss of their husband's with the help of their in-laws. Second, how widows met their economic needs by doing menial jobs, and with the help of aid provided by in-laws. Third, the help provided by the Churches. Living in a society with a Muslim concentration also affects the widows into Forced religion conversion. Furthermore, due to lesser check and balance on male orphans, they also get involved in various criminals' activities to support their families. The conclusion was the factors helped the widows overcome the psycho-emotional loss and recover economically.

Keywords: Christian Community, Church Attacks, Minority Victimization, Forced Religion Conversion, Violent Extremism.

Introduction

The post-2001 era witnessed the launching of the war on terror and its repercussions. Pakistan's entry in the war invited a reaction from a religious section of the population.¹ The Sunni militants of the infuriated religious section attacked the soft belly of Pakistan, the civilians, especially minorities including the Christians in an attempt to force the Pakistan's government to balk at its efforts in waging the war on terror.² Using the weapon of suicide bombing, Islamic militants attacked Christian churches repeatedly and have taken hundreds of innocent lives.³ The major loss of lives was of the male members of the Christian community. Families of the deceased have suffered greatly from psycho-emotionally and financially.

This study tried to address this question: Residing in Youhanabad (Lahore), how have the widows of the Christians, who had lost lives in suicide bombings in Roman Catholic and Christ Churches, sought self-help, community assistance and co-community participation in recovering from the consequent psycho-emotional and economic crises?

The objectives of the study were four:

1. Finding the way out that how widows cope emotionally with the loss of their husbands
2. To understand what measures widows have taken to make the economic survival of the family possible?
3. To identify the role of the Christian community and fellow communities in helping the widows cope with the crises?
4. To analyze the role of the government and non-government organizations to help the widows overcome the crises?

Research Methodology:

¹ Phillip Bobbitt, *Terror and consent: The wars for the twenty-first century* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 50-52.

² Stephen Philip Cohen, *The South Asia papers: A critical anthology of writings* (Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2016), 225-227.

³ Ali Akbar, "15 killed in Taliban attack on Lahore churches". *DAWN*, 15 March 2015. <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1169713>> [Last accessed: 07 May 2020]

The project is primarily in line with qualitative research methodology⁴ and aims to forge a general explanation on the issue of Christian widow resilience in the wake of terrorist attacks targeting the community. Secondary sources such as peer-reviewed academic journals (both domestic and foreign), published books on the subject, as well as material gathered from various online sources such as newspaper archives, are utilized for providing a cohesive review of existing literature and background to the study. It collected and analyzed the non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences of the widows and also used questionnaires for the research. Research participants interviewed a total of 16 widows whose husbands died suicide attacks on Roman Catholic and Christ Churches in Youhanabad, Lahore. In addition to that, an expert purposive sample⁵ of detailed interviews with widows from Lahore's Christian populated neighborhoods of Youhanabad and Joseph Colony forms the core of the study. The assumption made on part of the researcher is that this sample is representative of the entire population. In qualitative studies, interviews are especially important as they provide researchers rare access to others' observations and insights into the nature of their social life.⁶ Also, interviews are a particularly useful tool for learning the interior perceptions of people about specific events. Interviews in qualitative studies, such as this project, differ considerably from studies employing the quantitative framework. Interviews in quantitative studies are characterized by what Robert Weiss terms as their 'standardized precision',⁷ with data collected from such sessions presented categorically in the form of a table. Contrary to this; qualitative interviews require uniform questioning in pursuit of information that is more detailed. This is also why their sample size is much smaller than survey-orientated quantitative interviews. Moreover, since data collected from qualitative interviews cannot be as easily categorized, the researchers instead rely on other techniques such as summarization, interpretation, and thematic integration.⁸ For this project, the interviews conducted with the respondents were recorded and transcripts were made. Furthermore, to conceal the identity of the respondent, the study assigned them pseudonyms. The primary data collected from the interviews were compared with secondary sources to establish a co-relation by

⁴ *Qualitative Research in Political Science* (SAGE Library of Political Science, SAGE Publications, 2016), 504.

⁵ P. J. Lavrakas, *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008), 645.

⁶ R. S. Weiss, *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 1

⁷ *Ibid*, 2

⁸ *Ibid*, 3

highlighting similarities and differences. In doing so, the study sought to add new knowledge to the existing corpus through a defined process of the abstract idea, underlying theme, and subject matter that one can measure and analyze using survey questions. The difference co-related was divided later in the paper into two groups.

In recent years, researchers have increasingly looked at the model of ‘community resilience’ as an effective tool in conflict and terrorism studies, most notably in the realm of counterterrorism. This study also utilizes the community resilience model as a theoretical framework in the analysis of how Christian widows coped financially and emotionally in the wake of their husbands’ loss. ‘Resilience’ in counter-terrorism refers to the ability of individuals and communities to return to their normal state after a traumatic event, such as a terrorist attack. Today, the term ‘resilience’ is used for how affected individuals and communities should have organized and executed their counter-terrorism efforts on a broader level.⁹ It is important to note that despite its contemporary recognition in academic and policy-making circles, resilience is not a concept unknown. The concept of resilience has been used for at least 2000 years to define systemic capacity to overcome disruptions.¹⁰ In academic circles, the concept has been applied for decades in scientific fields such as physics, psychology, and ecology¹¹. The idea has since been expanded and acquired various explanatory dimensions in areas including engineering,¹² management studies,¹³ disaster management,¹⁴ social work, and criminology¹⁵. The application of the ‘resilience’ framework in the field of conflict studies concerns a desire by policymakers and practitioners to address concerns of threat perception and related phenomena. As such, the resilience concept has gained widespread attention after the 9/11 attacks and has been the subject

⁹ Sandra Walklate, Ross McGarry, and Gabe Mythen, “Searching for Resilience: A Conceptual Excavation”, *Armed Forces & Society*. 40 (2013): 408-409.

¹⁰ D. E. Alexander, “Resilience and disaster risk reduction: An etymological journey”, *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences* 13 (2013): 2707-2709.

¹¹ See ‘Designing Resilience: Preparing for Extreme Events’ by Arjen Boin, Louise K. Comfort, and Chris C. Demchak

¹² J. Bergström, R. V. Winsen and E. Henriqson, “On the Rationale of Resilience in the Domain of Safety: A Literature Review”, *Reliability Engineering & System Safety*, 141 (2015); 131–132.

¹³ T. J. Vogus and K. M. Sutcliffe, “Organizational Resilience: Towards a Theory and Research Agenda”, *IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man and Cybernetics* 1 December 2007: 3418–3419.

¹⁴ S. B. Manyena, “The Concept of Resilience Revisited”, *Disasters* 30 (2006): 434–435.

¹⁵ G. Mason and M. Pulvirenti, “Former refugees and community resilience: ‘Papering over’ domestic violence”, *British Journal of Criminology* 53(2013): 401-402.

of much debate and scholarly work.¹⁶ The following project would hence examine the experiences of Christian widows by comparing them with models of ‘resilience’ available from other parts of the world; with the overarching objective of providing guidelines to decision making bodies that would enable policymakers to expedite victims’ recovery process and replicate the model of resilience in other parts of the country.

Research Limitations

Despite the advantages of such a study, there also exist certain limitations. Firstly, the Christian community in Pakistan lives predominantly in segregated communities, which in turn makes approaching them for such a venture difficult. Secondly, the literacy rate amongst Pakistani Christians is below the national average; hence interview questions are to be framed in a simplified manner. This issue is somewhat mitigated as research participants in this study are fluent in local languages which aid in conducting and transcription of interviews. Participants involved in taking the interviews summarized the questions carefully in the local language and translated them. Participants used the literal translation or paraphrase technique. This means a word-for-word translation of the interviews of the widows. Another possible predicament in the study’s proposed research model is that the research focuses only on the Christian community present in Lahore and does not take into account a large proportion of Christians settled in other parts of the country. The study’s literature review and historical background attempt to address this issue by providing a comprehensive overview of the Christian community spread throughout Pakistan but it is important to note that significant differences exist between Christians residing in various parts of the country. The differences include but are not limited to, social class, ethnicity, education levels, and sectarian denomination (Protestant / Catholic). An ideal study would therefore have considered a larger sample size representative of the community all over Pakistan. However, a more narrow

¹⁶ S. H. Jore, “Is Resilience a Good Concept in Terrorism Research? A Conceptual Adequacy Analysis of Terrorism Resilience”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (March 2020): 5.

focus also has its advantages, as it makes the research more manageable and allows for a thorough study. Lastly, the research relies only on secondary sources in the English language to provide a general discussion on the Pakistani Christian community. Literature produced concerning the Christian community in local languages, such as Urdu and Punjabi, is not utilized. Reasons for such an approach are that English sources allow swift verification and provide ease of access. On the other hand, sources in local languages provide the advantage of a more intimate and localized narrative. For scholars aiming to tackle topics concerning minorities in Pakistan, a comparative analysis of literature produced on the issue in English and local languages provide an interesting option.

Literature Review

The dictionary definition of the word “resilience” is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or get restored to the previous lost state.¹⁷ In this sense, resilience means elasticity to bear the weight of a crisis and then back to normal after the calamity is over. The definition might be true for an insentient thing but not for a human being who is sentient enough to keep searching for normalcy after restoration. The loss of a loved one remains unfulfilled and unbearable – the major limitation resilience offers in the case of a human being.

According to Resilience Theory, it's not the essence of adversity that matters, but how we cope with it. Resilience helps us bounce back when we experience adversity, misfortune, or anger. It aids us in surviving, recovering, and even thriving in the face of adversity – but that's not all (Moore, 2021).

Many people experience loss or potentially stressful events in their lives, but they appear to have pleasant emotional experiences and display only small and temporary disturbances in their ability to function. Unfortunately, since much of psychology's understanding of how adults deal with loss

¹⁷ Resilience, *The Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 352.

or trauma comes from people who seek help or show signs of distress, loss, and trauma researchers have also dismissed this form of resilience as uncommon or pathological.

To recover quickly from difficulties is directly proportional to adapt new circumstances after a damaging event.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the ability to adapt is not without the capacity to adapt. In this way, resilience denotes the capacity for adaptation or it can be said that resilience is an outcome of successful adaptation irrespective of the severity of a given crisis.¹⁹

There are two schools of thought. One school of thought considers that individual resilience is more significant than community resilience. The reasons are two. First, it may be that individuals are more vulnerable to the crisis of various types. Second, individuals find it easy to expand their capacity to adapt to new realities of life.²⁰ There are more examples of individual resilience than community resilience.²¹

The dictionary definition of the word “community” is a group of people having a particular characteristic such as ethnicity or religion in common, and they also share a geographical place for living.²² Community offers a sense of membership and belonging in a group, and ancillary to it is the concept of protectiveness and security.²³ Regarding community resilience, the second school of thought says that a community develops resilience by enhancing its adaptive capacities and by interconnecting them to produce a profound end effect.²⁴ Both the adaptive capacities and

¹⁸ Ann S. Masten, Karin M. Best and Norman Garmezy, “Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity”, *Development and Psychopathology* 2 (October 1990): 426.

¹⁹ Ibid,2

²⁰ George A. Bonanno, “Resilience in the face of potential trauma”, *Current Direction in Psychological Science* 14 (June 2005): 136.; Kimberly A. DuMont, Cathy Spatz Widom and Sally J. Czaj, “Predictors of resilience in abused and neglected children grown-up: The role of individual and neighbourhood characteristics”, *Child Abuse and Neglect: the International Journal* 31 (April 2007): 255-256.; Fran H. Norris, Susan P. Stevens, Betty Pfefferbaum, Karen F. Wyche and Rose L. Pfefferbaum, “Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness”, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41 (April 2008): 133.

²¹ Bonanno, “Resilience in the face of potential trauma”, 136. ; DuMont, Widom and Czaj, “Predictors of resilience in abused and neglected children grown-up”, 255-256.

²² Community, *The Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary*, 79.

²³ Christophe Bene, Tim Frankenberger and Suzanne Nelson, “Design, monitoring and evaluation of resilience interventions: conceptual and empirical consideration”, Institute of Development Studies, *IDS Working Paper* 459 (July 2015): 7-9.

²⁴ Norris and others, “Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness”, 131.

networking help a community to join hands and elicit a monolithic joint response to an atrocity. Such a response do not only offers a sense of protection but also closes the areas of vulnerabilities.²⁵

In Pakistan, barring a few religious upheavals to Islamize the Constitution in 1985, the Christian community had been living in harmony with the local overwhelmingly Muslim community.²⁶ The gory incident of 9/11 disturbed the equilibrium, as in its wake Pakistan had to enter the war on terror headed by the countries having Christian majority population.²⁷ Armies led by the United States and the North Treaty Atlantic Organization (NATO) frequently raided Pakistan's northwestern border and the attacks took the lives of al-Qaeda operatives and their local supporters.²⁸ The bombs did not spare madrassas and the students therein seeking religious education, and, as collateral damage, innocent people also lost their lives.²⁹ Consequently, after 2004, Pakistan witnessed another wave of retaliation emanating from the northwestern area and sweeping across the whole country.³⁰ The attacks were also an attempt to bring the Pakistan government under pressure to withdraw its support to the war on terror.³¹

In central Punjab, Lahore became its prime victim. In Lahore, the Christian community especially those who were living in Joseph Colony and Youhanabad became easy prey. On 9th March 2013, somewhat 3,000 Muslim protestors torched approximately 100 houses, desecrated Churches, and looted houses of the Christians in Joseph Colony, Badami Bagh, Lahore accusing Sawan Maseh, a Christian resident of the colony, committing blasphemy.³² On 15th March 2015; on Sunday, two suicide bombers attacked two churches (Roman Catholic Church and Christ Church) of the

²⁵ . Ibid,2

²⁶ Farzana Shaikh, *Making sense of Pakistan* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 45, 67, 70, 77.

²⁷ Simon Jenkins, *Mission accomplished?: the crisis of international intervention* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015), 46, 50-51.

²⁸ Simon Jenkins, *Mission accomplished?: the crisis of international intervention* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015), 46 107-109.

²⁹ Bobbitt, *Terror and consent*, 48, 533.

³⁰ Ibid, 2

³¹ Declan Walsh, "Pakistan suicide bombers hit police station". *The Guardian*, 16 October 2009.

< <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/16/peshawar-suicide-bomb-pakistan-police>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

³² Correspondent, "Dozens of houses torched as mob attacks Lahore Christian locality". *DAWN*, 9 March 2013.

< <https://www.dawn.com/news/791408>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

Christian community in Youhanabad, Lahore, which resulted in the death of 15 Christians, and reaction mob violence took place on the same day consuming the lives of others.³³ The Jamat-ul Ahrar, a splinter group of the Tehreke-Taliban Pakistan claimed the responsibility for the suicide bombing in both churches.³⁴ Similarly, on 27th March 2016, an incident of the suicide bombing at the main entrance point of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park, Lahore, consumed the lives of 75 Christians and left 340 injured, who had been gathered to celebrate Easter Sunday in the recreation park.³⁵ This time, once again, an activist of the Jamat-ul Ahrar carried the attack consuming the lives mostly of children and women.³⁶ Though the International Christian Concern came forward to help the widows and children of the deceased male members of the Christian community,³⁷ the local support was nowhere to be seen. After the death of male members of the Christian community, the families left behind became devastated emotionally and deprived financially.³⁸ The widows of the deceased Christians had to manage the survival of the family and bear the psycho-emotional and financial losses.³⁹

Christians, the province's largest religious group, face three levels of persecution: terrorist attacks by extremists, lynching by ordinary citizens, and state abandonment. Muslims have been killed more than non-Muslims by terrorists.

Mob rule, on the other hand, has wiped out Christian communities in Lahore, Toba Tek Singh, Gujranwala, and Nankana Sahib. A pair was burned alive in Kasur following the Allegations of blasphemy were the catalyst for all of the events.

³³ In its devastation, the attack was only second to a double suicide-bombing attack in Peshawar consuming the lives of 82 Christians in 2013. See Akbar, “15 killed in Taliban attack on Lahore churches”.

³⁴ Shaimaa Khalil, “Deadly blasts hit Pakistan churches in Lahore”, *BBC News*, 15 March 2015. <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-31894708>> [Last accessed: 07 May 2020]

³⁵ Imran Gabol, “At least 72 killed in suicide blast as terror revisits Lahore”. *DAWN*, 27 March 2016. <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1248259>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

³⁶ Correspondent, “Scores killed in attack on park in Pakistan’s Lahore”. *Al-Jazeera*, 28 March 2016. <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/deadly-blast-hits-pakistan-lahore-160327143110195.html>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

³⁷ Correspondent, “Pakistani Christians turn tragedy into blessing with ICC’s help”. *International Christian Concern*, Washington, 25 March 2020. <<https://www.persecution.org/2020/03/25/pakistani-christians-turn-tragedy-blessing-iccs-help/>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

³⁸ Silent Thinker, “Mothers and widows remember the attacks on Youhanabad churches”. *Asia News*, 12 May 2015. <<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Mothers-and-widows-remember-the-attacks-on-Youhanabad-churches-34221.html>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

³⁹ Kamran Chaudhry, “Pakistani widow helps victims of violence”. *UCA News*, 30 August 2018. <<https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-widow-helps-victims-of-violence/83185>> [Last accessed: 7 May 2020]

After 9/11, the very first terror attack in Pakistan was on a Protestant church in Bahawalpur, which resulted in the death of 16 people. Five terror acts on Christians occurred the next year. But mob attacks predate that, as in Shantinagar and Khanewal, where mobs destroyed churches and burned down nearly 20 years ago, displacing over 2,000 Christians. Persecutions for blasphemy predate 9/11 as well. In 1998, Priest (John Joseph) living in Faisalabad committed suicide as a form of protest (Gill, 2016).

Blasphemy accusations are often used to settle property or business disputes, and that people's religious feelings are used to destabilize societies. What gives people the ability to be manipulated into barbarism? Christians are declared to be spies of the West by fervent mobs, but when did local religious folk (Christians) become such a proxy? They were never used as a vehicle for vengeance against the Raj's Christian colonizers. In reality, accounts show that during the violence of Partition, Christians were abandoned alone by rioters after marking their homes with crosses.

The Christian minorities were in a continuous struggle to find a room where they can freely practice or populate their families all around the world. Unfortunately, the response was terrified by the religious group. The situation in Iraq was also appalling as persecution increased after Saddam Hussein's fall. Many Christians fled Iraq. Christians and other minorities have been forced to convert, pay a draconian tax, or be killed as Islamic State has taken control of large parts of the region. As Isis advanced on Mosul, a city in a predominantly Christian area of northern Iraq, an estimated 100,000 people fled their homes. Isis has carried out public executions of Christians, some of which have been filmed and broadcast for propaganda purposes, and most churches have been destroyed.

Following by the other Muslim Country Afghanistan the situation there couldn't support in the favor of the Christian minorities. In Afghanistan, where Christianity is seen as western religion, there are few Christian believers. Those that do exist must keep their religion is hidden or face rejection from their families, or even death. But for hidden churches, there are no churches. Though Afghan Christians are the most vulnerable, foreigners are also at risk. Several Christian relief workers were assassinated in the country in 2014.

This paper focused on the incident of 15th March 2015, on Sunday morning, when two suicide bombers attacked two churches (Roman Catholic Church and Christ Church) of the Christian community in Youhanabad, Lahore.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Akbar, "15 killed in Taliban attack on Lahore churches".

Discussion

Resilience can be seen in the context of one's ability to adapt and one's capacity to adapt to new post-trauma circumstances both at the individual and community levels. The context of a family can also be considered for evaluating resilience; however, this qualitative research study focused on individual, family, and community resilience.

Part I: Individual and family resilience

To judge the ability and capacity to adapt, this study has adopted a criterion. It is known that whereas education and skill are abilities as resources needed for individual resilience, adequate housing is one of the main capacities for community resilience.⁴¹ Hence, it was assumed that if the bereaved family (the male head of which lost his life) had its own house, the family would have more capacity to adapt itself to new challenging circumstances, as compared to the family which did not have its own house. Based on this criterion, the interviewed widows were divided into two groups. Group A had its own house whereas Group B did not have its own house.

Group A	Own House
Group B	Didn't own House

Table 1

Before delving into the study further, it is significant to mention here that in their personal history, the two groups shared certain features. For instance, the deceased husband had five or more siblings, and the same is true for the widow. The couple was part of a joint family. The couple married in their early twenties. The couple was mostly illiterate or semi-illiterate having primary education and semi-skilled or no technical skills. The education, if obtained, was mostly primary (or secondary in exceptional cases) and the skills, if learnt, were such as knitting, craftsman, cleaner, etc. Per family, the couple procreated around five children. The couple used to earn just sufficient enough to survive. Their children were mostly semi-illiterate (got primary school education) and semi-skilled vocationally. All the interviewed widows were also having Muslim

⁴¹ Sylvia Kruse and others, "Conceptualizing community resilience to natural hazards – the embrace framework", *Natural Hazards Earth System Sciences* 17 (2017): 2325.

names. The deceased husband was doing lowly jobs such as a peon, security guard, watchman, mechanic, laborer, factory worker, salesman, sweeper, driver, or cleaner. In-laws are alive. Mostly, father-in-law remained of help. In some cases, in-laws also live in the same house.

In the following pages, the interviewed widows are divided into two groups to understand the difficulties faced and individual resilience developed.

Group A

Name	Belongings	Children	Children Employment Status	Education (Widow)	Employment (Widow)
Amna Bibi	Own House	3	Yes	Nil	No
Shaista Bibi	Own House	6	Yes	Nil	Makeup Service
Maryam Bibi	Own House	2	No	Nil	No
Asifa Bibi	Own House	2	Yes	Nil	No
Rasheeda Bano	Own House	3	No	Nil	No
Naseem Bibi	Own House	(Not clear)	No	Nil	No
Bisma Bibi	Own House	(Not clear)	Yes	Nil	Yes
Salma Bibi	Own House	5	No	Nil	Yes

Table 1.1

Criterion: The widow has her own house, which had been the property of her deceased husband.

After the loss of her husband in the Roman Catholic Church incident, the major concern of Amna Bibi was her family and its sustenance. The death of her husband coupled with the concern for the well-being of children. These concerns brought her under immense psycho-emotional stress which got transformed into physical ailments. As the psycho-emotional stress continued, so were the physical ailments. See Table 1.1

Amna Bibi said:

We were in disbelief and had no idea what had happened. We gradually realised the enormity of the situation. My son's and family's health were my main concerns... I was under mental and emotional strain. I haven't totally recovered, and I've suffered medical illnesses... After my husband died, the family had to arrange for meals, which cost us money... I'm weaker than I used to be. Though I am better than I was before the tragedy, we are still recovering... I lack technological skills to work.... My two sons and a daughter work to earn money for the family.”⁴²

Different people have different levels of stress coping mechanisms, whether inherited or acquired.⁴³ People who pass through a minor stress are better placed to cope with a bigger stress. Because of continuous stress on families due to financial, social issue etc. even when their husbands were alive made them go through continuous stress. It may be due to low family income, less skills, hard labors and close community. The loss of their husbands further break the widows and their families as their husbands used to manage all the financial as well as administrative matter within the family (Bonanno, 2004).

After the loss of her husband in the Christ Church incident, the major concern of Shaista Bibi was about her family members because of the mob violence ensued in the wake of suicide bombing.

Shaista Bibi said:

“My biggest concern was the safety of my family members, as mob violence had started...I faced economic challenges as we did not have money to buy next food. I worked and contributed as much as I could...I learnt no new skill. I survived by continuing my job which was to provide personal waxing services to female clients...I am stronger now than years ago...Out of my six children, only one son

⁴² Interview of Amna Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁴³ Fatih Ozbay and others, “Social support and resilience to stress: From neurobiology to clinical practice”, *Psychiatry* 4 (May 2007): 36.

works...I am still in the process of recovering from the incident. I still face emotional stress.”⁴⁴

Likewise, Maryam Bibi also feared for the life of her family members which remained in the aftermath of the bombing and the ensuing riots:

“They had already taken the life of my husband. After the rioting started, I feared my two sons would’ve fallen victim to the violence. After news spread of an approaching mob, I took my two young sons and headed straight out of Youhanabad. Thankfully, my sister provided us shelter for the next two weeks.” Maryam Bibi further added that, “I will never forget the terror which I and my sons (have) experienced⁴⁵.”

People who are skilled to earn money can cope with a crisis better than those who are without skills to survive economically.⁴⁶ One of the strengths of Shaista Bibi was that she used to run a small beauty salon engaged in offering waxing services to female clients. Though the tragic incident took its toll, her job supported her financially, and this was major reason for her coping with the incident. Her mechanism of developing resilience to the crisis has emerged from her skills to earn money to support her family.

After the loss of her husband in the Christ Church incident, the major concern of Asifa Bibi was the safety of rest of her family.

Asifa Bibi said:

“My only worry was the safety of the rest of my family. I faced a lot of stress and developed physical ailments because of it...In initial months, arranging for food was the biggest issue. We, somehow, arranged for our needs and later on decided

⁴⁴ Interview of Shaista Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁴⁵ Interview of Maryam Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁴⁶ Sylvia Kruse and others, “Conceptualizing community resilience to natural hazards – the embrace framework”, *Natural Hazards Earth System Sciences* 17 (2017): 2325.

to work to meet both ends...One of my sons was employed and the other was a car mechanic so we had small amounts saved. This was how we survived...I don't work...Nevertheless, I am weaker now... We haven't recovered at all. We are struggling to survive financially."⁴⁷

Similarly, Rasheeda Bano, who also lost her husband, narrated a familiar story:

"My husband was the sole breadwinner in the family and after him, I did not know what to do. It felt the world had collapsed. We had three daughters and no son, so I started to face massive pressure on how to manage daily expenses such as food etc. Fortunately, the first 6 months went by relatively easily as I received a lot of monetary help from the church and volunteer organizations. However, the situation changed after that. As of now, my daughters have all dropped out from school and we barely make ends meet."⁴⁸

Availability of income sources offers a major support in any crisis.⁴⁹ Finances offer a relief to psycho-emotional stress and help a victim cope with a given crisis.⁵⁰ Two sons of Asifa Bibi secured employment and they bore the cost of economic survival, thereby making resilience possible for her and her family. In the case of Rasheeda Bano, such an outcome was not possible.

After the loss of her husband in the Roman Catholic Church incident, the major concern of Naseem Bibi was the future of her children.

Naseem Bibi said:

"I felt like I was dead; too. I was filled with emotions and didn't know what to do, but worries of my children raised me up...I faced massive stress...Initially I faced financial problems but things improved later on...I was neither literate nor vocationally skilled. My younger son started working to take care of the family...I

⁴⁷ Interview of Asifa Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁴⁸ Interview of Rasheeda Bano conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁴⁹ Ozbay and others, "Social support and resilience to stress: From neurobiology to clinical practice", 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 2.

am much stronger now...but I am still in the process of recovering emotionally and financially.”⁵¹

Challenges themselves have a potential for making one strong willed.⁵² The source of strength for Naseem Bibi was the worry to raise children. The worry helped her overcome her grief. The younger son of her got employed and offered economic relief, thereby helping his mother develop resilience against the crisis.

After the loss of her husband the Christ Church incident, the major concern of Bisma Bibi was to find out a way of survival.

Bisma Bibi said:

“I was filled with emotions and didn’t know what to do... I faced a lot of stress...I faced economic problems but I became able to manage them, as my younger son got a job and I started working as a cleaner at a hospital...I am much stronger now...I have recovered emotionally but financial problems persist.”⁵³

Similarly, Salma Bibi also faced severe financial problems:

“Emotional well-being was not my immediate concern. The moment I heard about my husband’s loss, I began to worry about finances. We had five children, all of them are of school going age. What compounded our problems was that my husband was not on good terms with his extended family so I knew they would not help me out. My elder brother helped me find a cleaner job at a local store but I barely make enough money to survive two weeks. I don’t know how this will continue.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Interview of Naseem Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁵² Tamera R. Schneider, Joseph B. Lyons and Steven Khazon, “Emotional intelligence and resilience”, *Personality and Individual Differences* 55 (November 2013): 909.

⁵³ Interview of Bisma Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁵⁴ Interview of Salma Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

Finances offer a major support base.⁵⁵ Immediately after the incident, both Bisma Bibi and Samina Bibi sought employment and started to earn money to take care of the finances of their family. This was how they developed some degree of resilience.

One ground point which is found common in the narrative of all widows of Group A is that they did not bother much about psycho-emotional stress; instead, they were found more concerned about the financial stress inflicted upon the family. Further, they also tried to overcome economic challenges believing that the supply of sufficient money would help them heal their psycho-emotional wounds as well. In other words, not psycho-emotional stress but financial challenge was the first priority of the widows, and they coped with the challenge by arranging financial resources for themselves and their children.

Keeping the factor of capacity constant, one can find out that the families in Group A having skilled members to earn money developed resilience to the crisis earlier than that of the families of the competitive part of the group.

Group B

Name	Belonging	Children	Children Employment status	Education (Widow)	Employment (Widow)
Reshma Bibi	Didn't own house	Not clear	No	Nil	Security guard
Inaam Bibi	Didn't own house	1	No	Nil	Salon Assistance
Sania Bibi	Didn't own house	1	Yes	Nil	Cleaner

⁵⁵ Ibid, 3

Samina Bibi	Didn't own house	Not clear	No	Nil	No
Naima Bibi	Didn't own house	Not clear	No	Nil	Laborer
Meena Bibi	Didn't own house	Not clear	Yes	Nil	No
Kiran Bibi	Didn't own house	Not clear	No	Nil	Laborer
Sadia Bibi's	Didn't own house	Not Clear	No	Not clear	Teacher

Table 1.2

Criterion: The widow, along with her children, lives in the house of her in-laws.

After the loss of her husband in the Roman Catholic Church incident, the major challenge Reshma Bibi faced was to find out the way to avoid being thrown out of the house by in-laws. The next challenge was her concern about the future of her children in the absence of her husband.

Reshma Bibi said:

“I wasn't sure how I would be able to take care of my little children. There was also tension in our home as my husband's family wanted me to leave and they also tried to gain custody of my children...I faced massive stress and I am still coping with it...I faced economic challenges and tried to cope with them by doing multiple jobs...I had no skills to earn money, so I got employment as a security guard at Metro bus station and running a cloth shop in my house. My children are dependent on me for their survival. They don't work... I am stronger now than before...I have recovered financially but I still have a long way to go emotionally.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Interview of Reshma Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

Likewise, Inaam Bibi was also worried that with her husband now departed, she might have to face problems from her in-laws:

“After the bombings, my unmarried sister-in-laws' attitude towards me began to shift. They would condemn my presence in the house and question my burden on the family. I had nowhere else to go and was worried about raising my 6-year-old kid alone. My church recommended me for a job at a nearby salon after I began volunteering. Since then, I've been working and helping with the bills. This influenced my in-laws' attitudes. It's better now.⁵⁷”

Multiple crises multiply the intensity of given stress.⁵⁸ Reshma Bibi and Inaam Bibi had not only lost their husbands, but they also faced the threat of being abandoned by their in-laws. The reason they perceived was that they were considered a burden on the family, and this status they could not afford. Consequently, they transformed themselves to be an earning member of the family by doing multiple jobs. By doing so, they became relevant to and fruitful for their in-laws.

After the loss of her husband in the Christ Church incident, the major challenge Sania Bibi faced was to survive financially.

Sania Bibi said:

“I was worried about the financial expenses of the family and security. I had no skill to earn money, so I started doing the job of cleaning houses of people... My son works part time as property brokers...I am stronger now than before...We have not yet recovered fully from the incident especially financially because of rising inflation.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷Interview of Inaam Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁵⁸Fatih Ozbay and others, “Social support and resilience to stress: From neurobiology to clinical practice”, *Psychiatry* 4 (May 2007): 36.

⁵⁹ Interview of Sani Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

Earning or seeking gifts of money offers a major relief to stress.⁶⁰ Sania Bibi had to develop a mechanism to grow resilience in her. As she was lacking in vocational skills, she had to start working as a home servant doing the menial job of house cleaning to earn living for her children. One of her sons also helped to contribute economically.

After the loss of her husband in the incident of mob violence, the major concern of Samina Bibi was the well-being and economic survival of her children.

Samina Bibi said:

“I wasn’t sure how I would manage the finances of my kids...I faced stress alone. I faced financial crunch, but my father-in-law provided for us...My father-in-law works and helps us financially, as my children are too young to work and I have no skill to get any employment... I am much stronger now...I have recovered psycho-emotionally and financially from the loss of my husband.”⁶¹

Friends and relatives are a source of solace.⁶² Samina Bibi was helped by her father-in-law to make her life possible free of stress. The shelter of her father-in-law made it possible for her to develop resilience to the psycho-emotional and financial crises.

After the loss of her husband in the Roman Catholic Church incident, the major concern of Naima Bibi and Meena Bibi were their children.

Naima Bibi said:

“I didn’t know what would happen. I was worried for the safety of my little children...I faced a lot of stress...I faced severe economic problems, which was why I started working in a factory to earn my living but I had to leave the job

⁶⁰ Ibid, 2

⁶¹ Interview of Samina Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁶² Ibid, 4

because there was no one to look after my young kids...My husband's family members work as daily wage laborers and they help us monetarily...I am much stronger now than I was before...I have recovered emotionally but financial problems remain.”⁶³

Meena Bibi said:

“We were already struggling financially before the blasts, but my husband managed to put food on the table. My troubles multiplied after the attacks. In the house, there was continual stress because my brother in law's family was the only one contributing financially. Slowly, my eldest son acquired a cleaning job, and we started contributing to the household income. My family and mine are now living together peacefully.”⁶⁴

The joint or extended family system has its own benefits.⁶⁵ Naima Bibi was helped by her in-laws, who made her resilience to the stress possible. The joint family system helped Naima Bibi especially in the sphere of psycho-emotional field by letting her overcome the stress. In the case of Meena Bibi, the joint family system caused problems initially but things began to improve when her son found employment and began to contribute financially.

After the loss of her husband in the Roman Catholic Church incident, the major concern of Kiran Bibi was her little children.

Kiran Bibi says:

“I was shattered and I didn't know how I would take care of my kids...I faced a lot of stress...I also faced lots of economic problems and tried to make ends meet by doing menial jobs for different people. I earn just enough to survive...My children

⁶³ Interview of Naima Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁶⁴ Interview of Meena Bibi conducted on 8 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁶⁵ B. Heidi Ellis and Saida Abdi, “Building community resilience to violent extremism through genuine partnerships”, *American Psychologist* 72 (2017): 293.

are too young to work...I feel I am stronger now than before...I have not recovered financially. Instead, things are far worse than before.”⁶⁶

Sadia Bibi’s story was somewhat of an anomaly. Unlike most Christian widows, she came from a financially stable family:

“My only grievance was the emotional heartbreak of losing my husband. Being a retired school teacher with a handsome pension, I don’t have to worry about finances but I was shattered when I lost my husband. Although I have recovered emotionally to a great extent, with the support of my adult children, the scars still remain. I still remember the day it happened⁶⁷.”

The joint family extends a hand of help.⁶⁸ Kiran Bibi felt extra stress because her children were dependents. She did not depend on her in-laws, who were also very poor, and started working menial jobs to earn her living. Finances were not an issue for Sadia Bibi but she did face emotional psycho-emotional problems and her family played a big role in aiding her. Although she hasn’t fully recovered, but she still remains stable and can communicate fluently despite being a pensioner.

One point which is found common in the narrative of almost all widows of Group B is that in-laws came to rescue them. The joint family shared both psycho-emotional stress and financial burden of the widows and their children.

Keeping the factor of capacity mutable, one can find out that the families in Group B having in-laws who were earning money developed resilience to the crisis earlier than that of the families of the competitive part of the group.

⁶⁶ Interview of Kiran Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁶⁷ Interview of Sadia Bibi conducted on 15 August 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁶⁸ Ellis and Abdi, “Building community resilience to violent extremism through genuine partnerships”, 290, 294.

Nevertheless, the widows and the family in both groups were victims of the vicious cycle of poverty. Early age marriages, lack of education and skill, and a large family size were the major hindrances to full psycho-emotional and financial recovery.

The Government of Pakistan gave five hundred thousand (500,000 rupees) to each family in compensation.⁶⁹ Regarding the utility of the money, the attitude of each widow was different. Table shows that how widows in each group utilized the recompense.

Serial No	Name	Utility of recompense
		Group A
1	Amna Bibi	Used in meeting daily expenses
2	Shaista Bibi	Started a small business
3	Asifa Bibi	Bought 1 Marla land to start a shop
4	Naseem Bibi	Spent to pay loans and in meeting daily expenses
5	Bisma Bibi	Used in meeting daily expenses
6	Maryam Bibi	Spent to pay loans and in meeting daily expenses
7	Rasheeda Bano	Divided equally among her four sons
8	Salma Bibi	Used in meeting daily expenses
		Group B
9	Reshma Bibi	Used in meeting daily expenses
10	Sania Bibi	Spent mostly in the treatment of dying husband
11	Samina Bibi	Spent in Treatment, paying debt and meeting daily expenses
12	Naima Bibi	Constructed a washroom and used in meeting daily expenses
13	Kiran Bibi	Constructed two rooms and a washroom
14	Inam Bibi	Spent to pay loans and in meeting daily expenses
15	Meena Bibi	Used in meeting daily expenses
16	Sadia Bibi	Spent in paying debt

Table showing the way widows utilized 5 lakh given to each family as compensatory amount by the government of Pakistan.

Of them, three responses from Group A deserve mentioning. Shaista Bibi and Asifa Bibi utilized the recompense by starting their businesses. Both widows utilized the recompense as development-oriented investment, which would accrue monetary benefits in the future. Naseem Bibi serviced the debt to make her life free of indebtedness. One of the main reasons could be that the widows of Group A had their own house to live and they were independent to decide on any matter.

⁶⁹ Akbar, "15 killed in Taliban attack on Lahore churches".

Compared to Group A, no member of Group B invested the money in buying or establishing any business. Naima Bibi and Kiran Bibi utilized the recompense as non-development-oriented investment, which would not accrue any monetary benefits in the future. One of the main reasons could be that widows of Group B were relying on their in-laws to take decision and the in-laws were more interested in constructing rooms and washrooms in the same house.

Part II: Community resilience

Individual (and family) resilience influences community resilience.⁷⁰ That is, community resilience can't be seen in isolation from individual (and family) resilience, which collectively makes community resilience possible. In this study, it was found that, for the widows, the components of psycho-emotional stress were three. First and the foremost was the loss of the husband and their life partner. Second, there's the worry about children's futures. And third, there's the worry about finding a way to make ends meet. To find psycho-emotional peace, the widows had to face these challenges.

Elaborating on the role played by the government of Pakistan in the aftermath of the attacks; MPA Punjab Assembly Rameesh Singh Arora noted:

“Although I wasn't directly involved in providing relief to the victims, I can nonetheless explain in detail specific steps undertaken by the government as I was a member of the ruling party. The government launched different initiatives such as registering the victims' families in the ongoing Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), encouraging skills development of the victims' widows and providing them with interest free loans to facilitate opening of small businesses. Secondly, it should be noted that at the time, a separate government department was established to work for women empowerment which worked closely with civil society for the psycho-emotional welfare of the victims' widows. As for my own role in encouraging Christian Muslim harmony, I have personally participated in countless seminars and discussions at universities throughout the country and I can say with certainty that the majority of Pakistanis are very tolerant and live side by side with minorities without any issues.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 5

In Pakistan, the Christian community is not resourceful and prosperous.⁷¹ The Christian community was helped by the Christian churches. Other than the Government of Pakistan, that distributed Rupees 5 lakh (500,000) to each victim family in compensation. But, the major financial support came from churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Christ Church. The churches helped the widows immediately after the incidents or during the holy days, such as Easter, Good Friday and Christmas.

Mr Kashif Nawab, Director Social Action Transformation of Humanity (SATH Pakistan) said,

“I have been an active member of the organizations working for interfaith harmony and social cohesion. I have been participating in their programs as resource persons to advocate peace among communities of different faith.”⁷²

Reverend Irshad Ashknaz, Head of the Christ Church said:

“We provided them meal for few weeks. Secondly, we provided them ration and security for two weeks. Church has no resources to do much for them. But in order to cure them emotionally we made a Rafaqat e Khawateen (Woman Companion Organization) under Church. Widows come here, read Bible, heal their hearts and help each other’s. This forum is to heal them. The monetary help provided by the Church was greater than what the government offered. Moreover, we ensured that the children of the victims’ continue to receive free education sponsored by the church. As far as psycho-emotional assistance goes, regular discussions arranged by the church played a positive role in the widows’ recovery but no formal specialized program of such kind existed.”⁷³

According to Riaz Fazal, Treasury Officer of Christ Church:

⁷¹ Emmanuel Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians* (Lahore: Hamsookhan Publication, 2007), 214-215.

⁷² Interview of Kashif Nawab, Director Social Action Transformation of Humanity (SATH Pakistan), conducted on 12 September 2020 in Youhanabad, Lahore.

⁷³ Interview of Reverend Irshad Ashknaz, Head of the Christ Church, conducted on 20 September 2020.

“I lost my own brother in the bombing, so this was a personal tragedy for me. It must be noted that Christ Church takes donations from no one and operates entirely through member donations. The donations collected were distributed equally among the victims’ families but we don’t have enough resources to provide a monthly stipend. We also coordinated visits of ministers such as Rana Sanaullah and convinced our Christian brethren to defuse tensions from their side. I must say that the senior leadership of police played a positive role in this regard as the rioting was soon brought under control. As we don’t have the required resources, I demand that the government must fix a monthly stipend for the victims’ families and provide free higher education to their children⁷⁴.”

The widows, who said that the churches provided them help to sustain financially in the crisis, acknowledged their services.

Samina Bibi said:

“The Catholic Church helped and took care of our grocery expenses for 6 months. We also received cash from them on Easter, Good Friday and Christmas occasions.”⁷⁵

Bisma Bibi said:

“The Catholic Church helped and took care of our grocery expenses for 2 years. We also received cash from them on many occasions.”⁷⁶

Shaista Bibi said:

“Christian community helped us during Christmas only. No other help. They provided some grocery supplies and very little financial help.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴Interview of Anwar Fazal, Treasury Officer of Christ Church, conducted on 20 September 2020.

⁷⁵ Interview of Samina Bibi.

⁷⁶ Interview of Bisma Bibi.

⁷⁷ Interview of Shaista Bibi.

The community overly relied on the Church for support, both spiritual and worldly. Some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) also helped the widows by offering grocery supplies and monetary aid from time to time, but the help was sufficient for sustenance only.

Michelle Chaudhry, President of the Cecil and Iris Chaudhry Foundation, an NGO, said:

“After the twin bomb blast in two churches in Youhanabad, Lahore; there was a dire need to work on Communal harmony in the area. We launched a program with a primary purpose to contribute towards socio-political change by creating a just and tolerant society. Through that program the following activities were carried out: formation of peace committees, advocacy and lobbying meetings, interfaith harmony programs, training workshops, and seminars.”⁷⁸

Services of the NGOs were appreciated by the widows, who said that the NGOs help them with immediate financial help.

Reshma Bibi said:

“Both Christian and Muslim NGOs helped us. Muslim NGO’s helped us by donating money, and Christian NGOs helped me set up a small scale clothing business, besides donating mattresses. The Government of Pakistan should ... help me out in property disputes with my husband’s family.”⁷⁹

The Christian community promoted informal association between the widows to let them share their grievances and worries of one another and to help one another to survive the ordeal.

Shaista Bibi said:

⁷⁸ Interview of Michelle Chaudhry, President of the Cecil and Iris Chaudhry Foundation, an NGO, conducted in Lahore on 17 September 2020.

⁷⁹ Interview of Reshma Bibi.

“An informal association of victims existed, and we used to visit the authorities concerned together.”⁸⁰

The association has been a first step towards recovery.⁸¹ Nevertheless, there existed no formal association. Self-help was beneficial at both individual and community levels of resilience. Resilience was acquired through a painful ordeal, the hard way.⁸² Families having some money saved coped with the crises in a better way and expressed resilience earlier.

Resilience can be seen in the local context. The families where a member was engaged in earning activity recovered quickly from the crisis than the families having no earning member. Nevertheless, the Punjab Police did contribute by facilitating NGOs to help the widows recover from their agonies.

Critique

First, the study found four primary factors affecting widows' resilience: economic restrictions, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of occupational skills.

The accident was evaluated as the most traumatic of all probable losses on life event measures for the victims' relatives. Their marriage ends with their husbands' deaths, but their links remain. And sometimes it leads to a sensation of sticking in a relationship with an absent partner, exacerbating emotions of abandonment. Not only that, but their children have been devastated by their father's death. The survivors were assigned new tasks in addition to their old ones. As a result of the loss of their husband, the wife is not only responsible for the family money, but also for compensating emotionally.

Stressful for elderly widows who have never had financial instruction and often lack actual career abilities. Their young men had to aid their families because they lacked basic education and technical skills.

⁸⁰ Interview of Shaista Bibi.

⁸¹ Ellis and Abdi, “Building community resilience to violent extremism through genuine partnerships”, 291.

⁸² M. Balamir, “Painful steps of progress from crisis planning to contingency planning: Changes for disaster preparedness in Turkey”, *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 10 (2002): 40.

To elaborate, the huge family brought economic difficulties. Poverty reigned. There was also illiteracy. Not all family members were vocationally skilled. All these attributes indicated painful resilience.⁸³

Second, this study indicated that on one hand, the big family played a role in broadening ability and capacity whereas, on the other hand, a crisis befalling the family undermined the ability and capacity of both individuals and the family. In the perspective of Pakistan, the arrangement such as a big family with collective low level of illiteracy and skill may be suitable for a family which remains free of any accident or crisis throughout its organic life, but it is not a feasible formula for a family prone to accidents and crises.⁸⁴ Any upheaval holds the potential for inducing perpetual psycho-emotional stress and financial crisis in such families putting under test the resilience of the family, both at the individual and collective levels.⁸⁵

Third, this study indicated that both Groups A and B were engulfed in poverty. Whereas the strength of Group A was that it had its own house to live, the strength of Group B was that it enjoyed the support of in-laws to ensure its survival. In the context of Pakistan, the joint family system has its strength when more than one family member are earning hands; however, if one person has to bear all the family expenditures, the death of that earning head of family brings about immense problems for the rest of the members.⁸⁶

Fourth, this study indicated that all the interviewed widows were carrying Muslim names. It is quite a common practice in Pakistan that Christians adopt two names: either the first name as a Christian name and the second name as the Muslim name, or two names, a Christian name and a Muslim name.⁸⁷ One of the reasons is that the Christians try to hide their identity in an identity

⁸³ Ibid, 6

⁸⁴ Fahad Saqib Lodhi and others, "Level of satisfaction and its predictors among joint and nuclear family systems in District Abbottabad, Pakistan", *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran* 33 (June 2019): 5.

⁸⁵ Fatih Ozbay and others, "Social support and resilience to stress: From neurobiology to clinical practice", *Psychiatry* 4 (May 2007): 36-37.

⁸⁶ Lodhi and others, "Level of satisfaction and its predictors among joint and nuclear family systems in District Abbottabad, Pakistan", 5-6.

⁸⁷ Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians*, 236.

conscious society of Pakistan, as the Christians think that they would be the victim of suppression.⁸⁸

Fifth, this study indicated that the widows did not learn any new skill and this attitude militated against the prospects for full recovery of the widows from financial constraints. Resultantly, the widows overly relied on the help, from the church, from the government, from the NGOs or from generous people, from both Christians and Muslims community. Not cash but food in kind was provided to them.

Sixth, this study indicated that the Christian community is a fractured community which is engaged in intra-community disputes and intra-family feuds that added miseries to the agonies. The community was not found much interested in helping its members. In principle, communities wherein members help each other come out from disasters successfully.⁸⁹ There were disputes amongst the Christian families impeding the community's growth.

Seventh, this study indicated that the widows took no initiative to forge a formal association of the affecters to get a platform to make their voice heard. It is known that associations help overcome crises and disasters quickly.⁹⁰

Eight, the study indicated that the Christian community was still fearful of any repeat incident of suicide bombing or assault by Muslim fanatics. In Youhanabad, Lahore, the Christian community is surrounded by Muslim majority settlements and the police are deficient in having record of Muslim bigots who have the potential for launching another attack on the Christians and their churches.⁹¹

Conclusion

⁸⁸ Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians*, 75.

⁸⁹ M. Balamir, "Painful steps of progress from crisis planning to contingency planning: Changes for disaster preparedness in Turkey", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 10 (2002): 40-41.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 7

⁹¹ Akbar, "15 killed in Taliban attack on Lahore churches".

The aim of this study is to discover out how widows of Christians who had lost loved ones in suicide bombings at Roman Catholic and Christ Churches sought self-help, community support, and co-community engagement in recuperating from the resulting psycho-emotional and economic crises in Youhanabad (Lahore).

The widows' resilience was affected by four primary factors: economic constraints, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of occupational skills. The widows were victims of poverty. Weak educational and skill levels, coupled with high family sizes, hampered full psycho-emotional and financial recovery. All of these traits showed overcoming adversity.

Having skilled people to make money, the families in Group A built resilience to crises earlier than the families in the competitive half of the group. The widows in Group A were more concerned about the financial impact on the family than the psycho-emotional stress. They also tried to overcome economic obstacles, hoping that enough money would help them heal their emotional traumas.

Because the widow and her children reside with her in-laws, families in Group B with income-earning in-laws developed crisis resilience earlier than families in the competitive portion of the group. The widows in Group B felt their in-laws shared their children's emotional and financial burdens. The extended family arrangement allowed them to cope with stress.

Both groups encountered similar obstacles immediately after a loss, but there were two key variances. First, widows in Group A recovered faster (by putting their kids to work) and better than widows in Group B (who sought financial help from in-laws). Second, the widows of Group B recovered from psycho-emotional trauma faster and better than the widows of Group A. Moreover, when the children of Group B widows found work, the situation was quickly over. Generally, families with savings fared better during crises and showed more resilience.

Each widow had a different opinion on the value of the Rs 5 lakh (500,000) provided by the Pakistani government as compensation. Only two widows (from Group A) used the recompense to start enterprises, because they had their own homes and were self-sufficient. The widows in

Group B, on the other hand, used their money to build rooms and bathrooms in their in-laws' homes because they didn't have their own and couldn't make decisions. Besides the Pakistani government, the Roman Catholic and Christ Churches were the biggest donors. It was during holy days like Easter, Good Friday, and Christmas that churches aided widows.

The widows have Muslim names due to social pressure. Even after the catastrophe, the widows showed no interest in learning new skills to improve their financial chances. The Pakistani government has also failed to provide occupational skills to these widows. NGOs provided both monetary and in-kind assistance. The Christian community is riven by intra-community and intra-family feuds, adding to the pain. This hampered long-term mutual aid. The widows did not take the initiative to organize a formal affected organization to voice their concerns.

The Christian community feared a recurrence of a suicide bombing or a Muslim zealot attack. The Christian community encouraged widows to create informal groups to communicate grievances and concerns and to support one another through the suffering. No official association existed. The Pakistani government has taken numerous steps to encourage minorities to speed their schooling. The government also recreated the minorities' commission to protect their safety and that of their sacred locations. The Government enthusiastically supports the implementation of 2006 curricular reforms, which represent a substantial step toward eliminating religious bias in textbooks. Several institutions provide technical and medical training to minorities without discrimination. Ensuring that minorities, especially Christians, have equal access to government jobs is a priority for the administration. In short, widows or families who could earn money (or save money) managed better with the crisis than those who could not make money (or save money).

Recommendations

1. Special arrangements should be made by the elected member of their community I-e MPA's/MNA's. Elected parliamentarians should present a bill and work in legislative house according to their needs which are inevitable to be full filled.

2. Widows, children, and widowers should receive counselling and vocational assistance from local governments to help them reintegrate into society. Minorities should be encouraged to vote in local elections or be included in committees to resolve local municipal and administrative concerns.
3. The idea of compulsion of marriage in early age should be reviewed. In Pakistani society, early age marriage reduces the chances of getting educated and seeking vocational skills, as the couple diverts attention towards family formation. Moreover, early age marriage is a source of having more children than to feed sufficiently in any hour of crisis.
4. Different publishing materials and campaigns should be organized to spread awareness about this issue. Ministry of minority affairs is working tirelessly in this regard but efforts should be accelerated further.
5. Reforming the Union Council structure to ensure equal representation for the widows; providing alternate conflict resolution forums for peaceful resolution of local matters relating to minorities' personal affairs; and establishing quick response committees that are responsive to concerns such as forced conversion and gender rights by the Local Government.
6. Revising the mandates of Ministries, the Commission for Minorities, and other official bodies in charge of monitoring minority rights and affairs, as well as providing funding to these agencies, to give them special aids to the widows and sponsor their families providing them the technical skills as well as education.
7. The Christian community needs to look into the causes of dissociation amongst its members leading to disunity. Any community which is united can recover from a crisis better when it is united.

8. Both the government and the NGOs should promote the formation of informal and formal associations of the affected or victims of crises to sew them together in order to console each other and cope with the crisis together.
9. (Special aids should be delivered by the Government (Federal/ Provincial/ Local) to Christian community especially for the victims of psycho emotional trauma and proper rehabilitation should be given to them. Rehabilitation centers within their communities should also be established.
10. Ensure proper law enforcement by Government of Pakistan for the protections of minority representatives, legal assistance and social workers, as well as victim women and families.by the specific ministries
11. Both the government and the NGOs should promote interfaith dialogue and harmony more than before to reduce disharmony and misunderstanding between the Christian community and the co-habiting Muslim community.
12. All Christian institutions nationalized by Z.A. Bhutto in the 1970s should be returned to them.

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