

**Unveiling the Shifts: Investigating Temporal Trends in Crimes Against Women in Balochistan, Pakistan**



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**Abstract:** *The aim of this research is to assess various forms of violence against women in Quetta, Pakistan. The data collection for this study encompassed both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data were gathered from 2005 to 2020, specifically from the Shaheed Benazir Women Centre and Shelter Home Quetta. Primary data, on the other hand, was acquired through interviews with officials from the Shaheed Benazir Women Centre, Shelter Home Quetta, and the in-charge of the Police station in Sariab, Quetta. Secondary data underwent analysis employing Excel software. The findings reveal that domestic violence cases were the most prevalent, totaling 280 cases, during the specified time frame. Other noteworthy reported crimes include matters related to maintenance and dowries (97 cases), forced marriages (56 cases), women trafficking (53 cases), forced property acquisition (48 cases), honor killings (29 cases), kidnapping (28 cases), murder (9 cases), early marriages (9 cases), and divorce (6 cases). The primary data, meanwhile, was subjected to qualitative analysis. Examination of the annual data on total crimes indicates a consistent decline in reported crimes against women in Quetta after 2014. The results derived from this study emphasize the necessity for policymakers to adopt robust measures to combat domestic violence against women in Quetta.*

**Keywords:** Temporal trend of Crime; Domestic violence; Murder; Honor killing; Quetta; Pakistan

## Introduction

Violence against women is experiencing an upward trend both nationally and internationally. This escalation contributes significantly to the poor physical and mental health of women (Krantz & Garcia, 2005). Recent research indicates that approximately 60% of women across the globe have endured physical assaults from their male partners in close proximity (Krug et al., 2002). Moreover, around 52% of women encounter physical abuse, with a higher prevalence in developing nations (Heise et al., 2002).

In Pakistan, a comprehensive legal framework

has been established to safeguard women from domestic violence and other transgressions. This framework encompasses legislations such as the Protection of Women Bill 2006, the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010, the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices 2011, and the Prevention & Protection Act 2012. While these enactments have offered protection to women and vulnerable age groups, instances of violence against women and young individuals are still reported annually. The prevailing issue in Pakistan revolves around violence against women (Babur, 2007). This persists due to the failure to implement these laws, primarily

because of tribal constraints (Critelli, 2010). In a male-dominated society like Pakistan, domestic violence and related offenses are commonplace. Particularly in tribal communities like Balochistan, the notion of masculinity is deeply ingrained in the male psyche (Khalil & Ahmad, 2010). Women often confront violence issues as they continue to be denied equality with men (Krantz & Garcia, 2005). Domestic violence is frequently perpetrated by close relatives, including husbands, brothers, cousins, uncles, and fathers. However, due to the influence of tribal norms, only a fraction of cases are officially reported, as traditions often take precedence over the rule of law (Parveen, 2010). An examination of the existing literature reveals a notable deficiency in both primary and secondary data utilization in prior research on crimes against women in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan. Consequently, our study endeavors to delineate the temporal trends (2005-2021) in crimes against women in Quetta, Balochistan, by employing a combination of primary and secondary data sources.

### Methodology

The study focused on Quetta as the research area due to its status as one of the most densely populated districts in Balochistan, known for its diverse representation of the entire province's ethnic groups. In pursuit of our research objectives, secondary data was sourced from the "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Centre and Shelter Home Quetta," covering the period from 2005 to 2021. Primary data, on the other hand, was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with officials from the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Centre and Shelter Home Quetta, as well as the Incharge of the Police Station on Saria Road. The primary data collection occurred in March 2022.

In the initial phase, secondary data underwent a filtering process, with crimes of frequent occurrence included in the dataset. Crimes that manifested very rarely, such as once or twice during the entire 16-year span (2005-2021), were excluded from consideration. Excel and graphical tools were employed to analyze the data, elucidating temporal trends through graphical representations, including bar graphs

illustrating the total instances of crimes committed against women during the study period, along with separate graphs for each year. The primary data, conversely, underwent qualitative analysis in the form of descriptive interpretations.

### Results and discussion

The research delves into the various types and temporal trends of crimes against women in Quetta spanning from 2005 to 2021. Despite constitutional provisions emphasizing equality, freedom from exploitation, and empowerment in Pakistan, violence against women and girls remains alarmingly prevalent in both public and private spheres. The following is a breakdown of the findings, illustrated in Figure 1, for each type of crime:

**1. Domestic Violence:** Comparatively, domestic violence exhibits the highest incidence when contrasted with other crimes against women. The highest number of cases was reported in 2013, with 2018 indicating the lowest. The data portrays fluctuations across different years, with no discernible justification. It's imperative to acknowledge that violence against women poses significant public health risks, as supported by Teresi et al. (2016). A survey reveals that 70-90% of Pakistani women experience domestic violence, and Sadia et al. (2019) found that as respondents' monthly income rises, violence against women decreases by 90%.

**2. Forced Possession of Property:** The year 2008 recorded the highest number of cases, primarily attributed to the tribal society's common practice. Pakistan's ranking of 135 out of 136 countries, as per the Global Gender Gap Report 2013, underscores the severe gender disparities.

**3. Kidnapping:** Kidnapping cases surged in Southern Punjab in 2008 compared to 2007. There was nearly a twofold increase from 2007 to 2008, with 71 cases of attempted kidnapping in 2007 escalating to 104 in 2008. Quetta witnessed more kidnapping cases in 2007 but fewer in 2010.

**4. Women Trafficking:** Women and children

are more likely to be exploited during political and economic crises, particularly in trades like human trafficking, according to multiple studies and reports (Bruinsma & Meershoek, 2012; UNHCR, 2001). The trafficking of women and girls from Afghanistan into forced marriages continues, resulting in health challenges. Reported cases of women trafficking were highest in 2011.

**5. Maintenance & Dowry Matters:** The year 2007 saw the highest number of cases. Dowry disputes are commonly rooted in cultural norms, leading to the persecution of brides and various forms of domestic violence. Disagreements often arise due to unequal dowry demands from the groom's family.

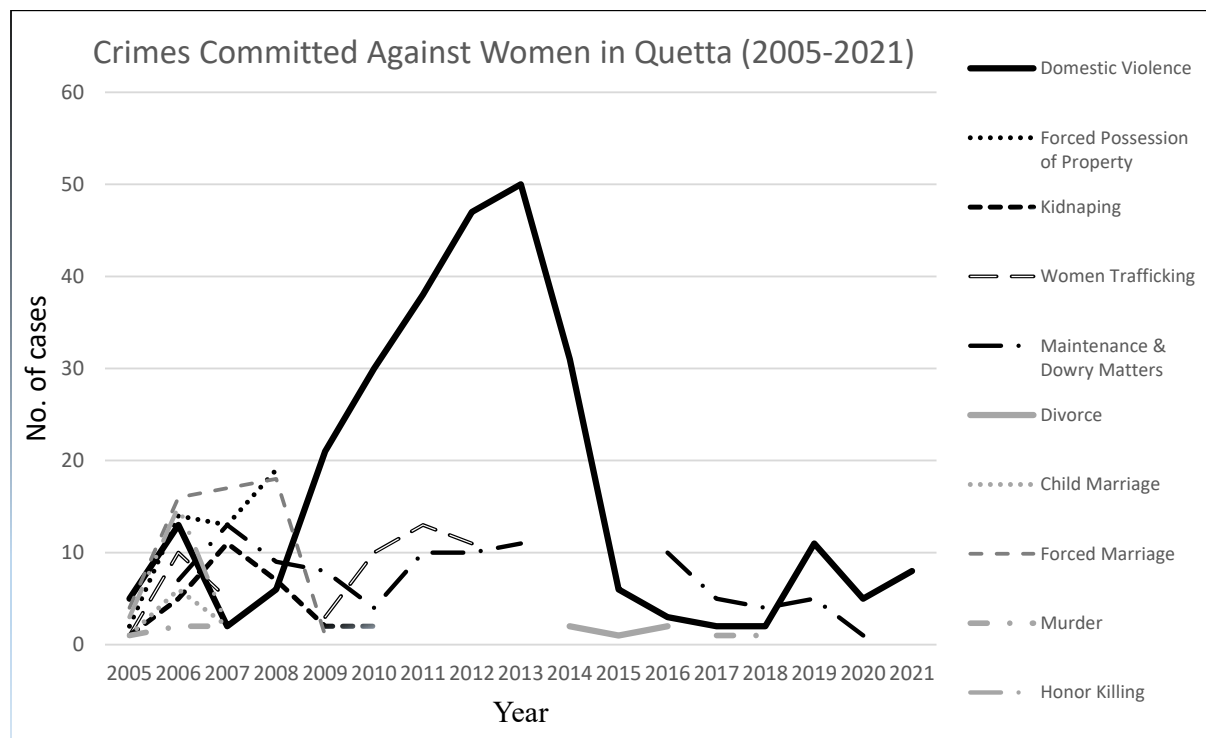
**6. Divorce:** Pakistan has witnessed a rising divorce rate, exemplified by 40,410 divorce cases recorded in Karachi courts in 2010. Lahore's courts have seen approximately 150 divorce cases daily since 2014.

**7. Child Marriage:** Although rare, child marriages, notably prevalent in Southeast Asian nations like Pakistan, tend to occur due to the desire to alleviate the perceived burden of daughters.

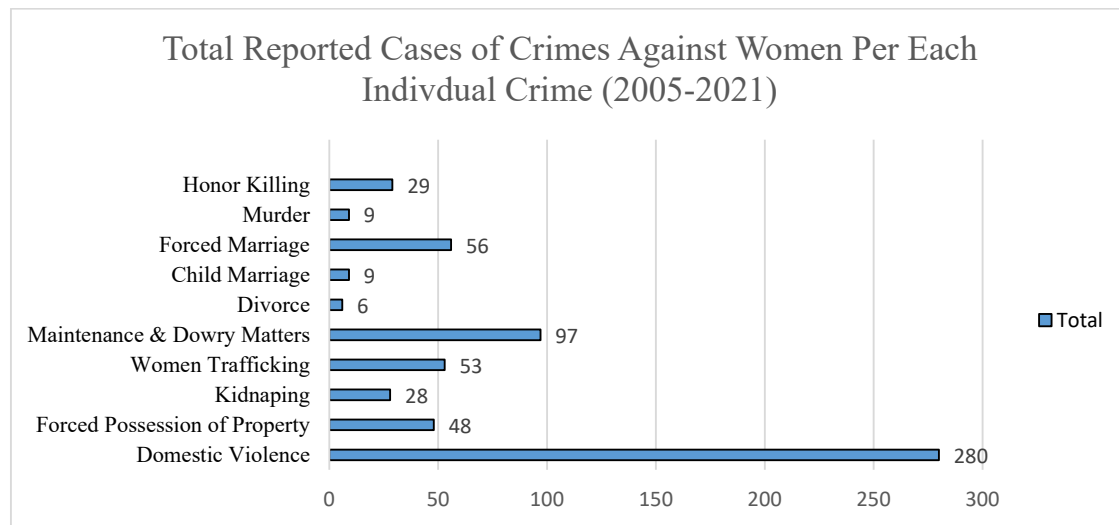
**8. Forced Marriage:** Forced marriages, driven by gendered vulnerabilities stemming from conflicts and crises, especially in Afghanistan, pose a risk to women and girls. This phenomenon can be traced back to the conditions in Afghanistan that encouraged human trafficking and, consequently, forced marriages. Although underreported, the highest cases were reported in 2008.

**9. Murder:** Murder cases are scarce, with only two cases reported in 2006, 2007, and 2014. An alarming report indicates that between 2015 and 2016, 11,000 women were killed by family members for purportedly dishonoring their family. The same report details sexual assault incidents involving 900 women and 800 suicide attempts (Hussain et al., 2016).

**10. Honour Killing:** Honour killings, while occurring, exhibit their highest count in 2006, with 15 reported cases. Regrettably, these heinous acts persist due to the lack of societal stigma. Astonishingly, only 20% of honour killings in Pakistan result in prosecutions (Amnesty International, 1999).

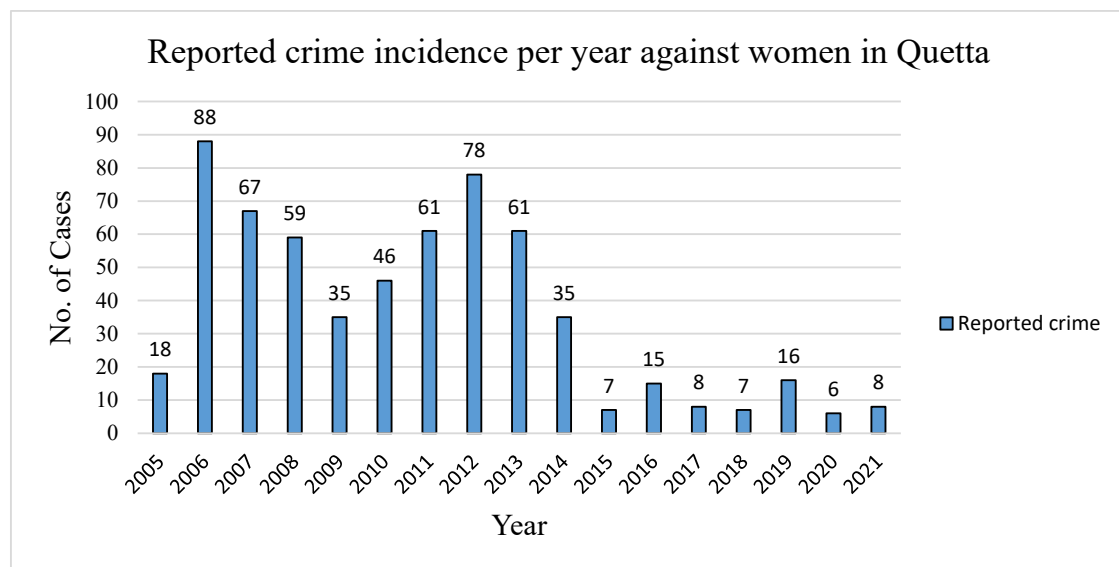


## Reported Cases of crimes against women for the period 2005-21



The annual pattern of crimes committed against women in Quetta 2005-21

Graph no.2. show the total number of all crimes committed against women



### Conclusion and recommendations

This research bears significant fruit as it offers a comprehensive examination of various facets within a predominantly male-dominated society, yielding illuminating results. The overarching narrative underscores the pervasive presence of diverse forms of violence against women across different settings and strata of society. A blend of primary and secondary data sources has been meticulously woven into this study's fabric.

The primary focal point for data collection was the "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Centre and Shelter Home in Quetta," where data spanning from 2005 to 2021 were painstakingly compiled. Supplementary data were also procured from the Sariab Road police station. The ensuing analysis has unearthed disquieting revelations.

In essence, the extent of violence against women in Balochistan is profoundly disconcerting.

Women bear a disproportionately heavier burden in this region. Despite concerted endeavors by both governmental and non-governmental sectors, women continue to endure deplorable living conditions. It is imperative that this framework aids various stakeholders, including men, women, public health experts, and policymakers, in comprehending the intricate dynamics of violence against women and galvanizes them to take requisite action.

In the contemporary world, a substantial number of women in Balochistan grapple with domestic violence and remain vulnerable to honor killings. In light of this appraisal of the plight of women, specific recommendations emerge with the intent of ameliorating women's lives and ensuring they thrive in a secure and nurturing societal milieu.

Both non-governmental and governmental organizations must embark on a concerted initiative to reshape societal perspectives, fostering a viewpoint where women are recognized as vital and active contributors to the social fabric. Additionally, on the legislative front, there is a compelling need for robust enforcement of laws that unambiguously classify domestic and familial abuse as criminal offenses. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be adequately funded to deliver a gamut of services to victims of violence, encompassing shelters, legal advocacy, counseling, and medical support.

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