



Policy Journal of Social Science Review

ISSN (Online): 3006-4635

ISSN (Print): 3006-4627

<https://journalofsociasciencereview.com/index.php/PJSSR>



Vol. 2 No. 4 ,(Fall-2024)

Policy Journal of Social Science Review



Family Trauma and Child Custody in Pakistan

Aatif Ali¹

Dr. Tansif Ur Rehman²

Pasand Ali³

Dr. Sajida Parveen⁴

Dr. Muhammad Ahad Yar Khan⁵

OJS
OPEN
JOURNAL
SYSTEMS

HJRS HEC Journal
Recognition System

Family Trauma and Child Custody in Pakistan

Aatif Ali	Department of Law of Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education, Karachi, Pakistan. atifalirana118@gmail.com
Dr. Tansif Ur Rehman	Department of Law, Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education, Pakistan. tansif@live.com
Pasand Ali	Department of Law of Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education, Karachi, Pakistan. pasandalikhaki8@gmail.com
Dr. Sajida Parveen	College of Management Science, PAF KIET Karachi, Pakistan. drsajidaparveen@hotmail.com
Dr. Muhammad Ahad Yar Khan	Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Jinnah Government College, Karachi, Pakistan. mahadyarkhan@gmail.com

Abstract

Family trauma and child custody issues in Pakistan are critical areas of concern, reflecting broader societal challenges. The interplay between cultural norms, legal frameworks, and psychological impacts shapes the experiences of families undergoing custody disputes. In many cases, traditional views on gender roles and parental rights can exacerbate trauma for children and custodial parents alike. The legal system often prioritizes the father's rights, which may lead to further emotional distress for mothers and children, particularly in cases of domestic violence. This paper examines the dynamics of family trauma in the context of child custody battles, emphasizing the psychological effects on children and the role of social support systems. It highlights the need for reforms in custody laws to protect children's welfare better and promote mental health resources for affected families. The findings underscore the importance of a more balanced approach to custody that considers the well-being of children, advocating for a shift towards more trauma-informed practices within the legal system.

Keywords: Child custody, cultural norms, family trauma, legal reforms, psychological effects

INTRODUCTION

Family trauma and child custody issues in Pakistan are increasingly significant concerns, reflecting the intricate interplay of cultural, legal, and psychological factors within society. The family unit, traditionally viewed as a source of support and stability, often becomes a battleground in cases of custody disputes, particularly in the context of domestic violence, economic hardship, and entrenched gender roles. These challenges impact the parents involved and have profound implications for children, whose emotional and psychological well-being is at stake, according to Siddiqui et al. (2021).

In Pakistan, societal norms often dictate familial structures and relationships, where patriarchal values are deeply rooted. This cultural backdrop can exacerbate trauma for mothers and children, especially in custody cases where traditional views prioritize fathers' rights. Women frequently face significant barriers when seeking custody, particularly if they have experienced domestic violence. The legal system, while theoretically designed to protect the welfare of children, often reflects these cultural biases, leading to outcomes that can deepen the emotional distress for vulnerable family members (Qamar, & Faizan, 2021).

The psychological impacts of family trauma on children cannot be overstated. Research has shown that children involved in custody disputes often experience anxiety, depression, and a sense of instability. They may struggle with feelings of abandonment or loyalty conflicts, particularly if one parent is deemed more favorable in the eyes of the law. The ramifications of such trauma can extend into adulthood, affecting emotional regulation, relationship-building, and overall mental health (Zafar et al., 2022).

Legal frameworks surrounding child custody in Pakistan are evolving, yet they still require significant reform to address the realities of family trauma effectively. The current system tends to emphasize the father's rights, which can overlook the critical needs of children and the protective roles mothers often play. As a result, there is an urgent need for reforms prioritizing children's welfare above parental claims. It necessitates a shift toward a more balanced approach that considers the unique circumstances of each case and the potential psychological impacts on children (Abbas et al., 2023).

Moreover, social support systems are crucial in navigating these tumultuous situations. Community organizations, counseling services, and legal aid can provide essential resources for families in crisis. However, access to these services is often limited, particularly in rural areas where traditional values may further impede women's rights and support options. Enhancing awareness and availability of mental health resources is vital in addressing the psychological fallout from family trauma and improving outcomes for children (Lakhdar et al., 2021).

The issues surrounding family trauma and child custody in Pakistan are complex and multifaceted. They reflect broader societal challenges, including gender inequality and

insufficient legal protections for vulnerable families. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between cultural norms, legal frameworks, and psychological impacts. By advocating for legal reforms and improving support systems, we can move toward a more equitable and trauma-informed approach to child custody that prioritizes the well-being of children and supports families in their times of need. As society evolves, it is imperative that we confront these challenges head-on, fostering an environment that nurtures and protects the most vulnerable members of our community (Rasool et al., 2024).

RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

Family trauma significantly impacts child custody decisions in Pakistan, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of its effects on children's well-being. The social and cultural context in Pakistan often places a strong emphasis on familial integrity. However, many families face challenges such as domestic violence, mental health issues, and socioeconomic instability. These factors contribute to an environment where children may experience emotional, psychological, and physical trauma. Research indicates that children exposed to family trauma are at a heightened risk of developing behavioral and emotional problems, which can affect their adaptability in custody arrangements. Courts in Pakistan are increasingly recognizing the importance of a child's mental health in custody cases, shifting from traditional norms that prioritize the mother's or father's rights to a more child-centered approach.

Furthermore, the legal framework, including the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, emphasizes the child's welfare as the paramount consideration in custody decisions. However, the implementation of these principles often varies, highlighting the need for further research and training for legal practitioners to assess family dynamics and trauma better. Understanding the nexus between family trauma and custody outcomes can inform policy improvements, support services, and legal reforms aimed at protecting children's rights and fostering healthier family environments. This research is crucial for creating effective interventions that prioritize children's psychological and emotional needs within the Pakistani context.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the historical background of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan.
2. To discuss the leading family trauma and child custody in Pakistan.
3. To highlight the theoretical context of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan.
4. To analyze the challenges and opportunities for family trauma and child custody in Pakistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic review methodology, with research objectives established accordingly. A comprehensive literature review was conducted (Komba & Lwoga, 2020). Research findings were categorized based on their content (Hiver et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), and classified information was incorporated into the study by organizing it into headings (Gan et al., 2021; Pawson et al., 2005). The evaluation of classified information and titles formed the basis of the study (Page, 2021; Rahi, 2017), ensuring the integrity of the research subject and its contents (Egger et al., 2022; Victor, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan is a complex issue influenced by sociocultural, legal, and psychological factors. This literature review examines existing research and theoretical frameworks to provide insights into how family trauma impacts child custody decisions and the broader implications for children's welfare in Pakistan (Jabeen, 2021).

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY TRAUMA

Family trauma encompasses a range of experiences that disrupt familial relationships and stability, including domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and economic hardship. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exposure to violence and trauma can have long-lasting effects on children's physical and mental health. In Pakistan, where societal norms often emphasize familial integrity, these traumas may be overlooked or stigmatized, leading to inadequate support systems for affected children (Nawaz et al., 2022a).

Highlights that children exposed to domestic violence often experience emotional distress, behavioral problems, and developmental delays. The findings underscore the critical need for mental health interventions and protective measures within custody arrangements. Additionally, studies have shown that children from traumatized families are at a greater risk of experiencing cycles of violence, which perpetuates a detrimental cycle impacting future generations (LeMasters et al., 2021).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CHILD CUSTODY

The legal landscape governing child custody in Pakistan consists of the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, which emphasizes the child's welfare as the foremost consideration. However, the application of this principle varies widely across different contexts. Custody decisions have traditionally favored maternal custody, often overlooking the implications of family trauma on the child's well-being (LaBore et al., 2021).

It was found that judges often lack training in recognizing signs of trauma and its effects on children. Consequently, custody decisions may inadvertently perpetuate cycles of trauma by placing children in environments where they are likely to experience further emotional or

physical harm. This misalignment between legal standards and the realities of family trauma necessitates a reassessment of existing practices in a study by (Nawaz et al., 2022b).

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON CUSTODY DECISIONS

Cultural norms significantly shape perceptions of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan. The patriarchal structure often places mothers in a subordinate position, leading to biases in custody decisions that do not consider the father's potential for harmful behavior research by Iqbal and Fatmi (2021).

Indicates that societal attitudes frequently prioritize maintaining familial ties over child safety, resulting in custody arrangements that may not serve the child's best interests. Moreover, the stigma associated with mental health issues and domestic violence prevents many families from seeking help. The fear of social ostracism can lead to a reluctance to disclose family trauma during custody proceedings, further complicating the assessment of the child's needs (Abbas & Jabeen, 2023). Understanding these cultural dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions and legal reforms (Richardson et al., 2022).

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Research supports the notion that trauma significantly influences child development. Exposure to adverse experiences during critical developmental periods can lead to long-term psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, and attachment disorders. In Pakistan, the lack of adequate mental health resources exacerbates these challenges, leaving many children without necessary support. The effects of trauma extend beyond individual experiences; they can alter familial relationships and social functioning. Studies indicate that children from traumatized backgrounds may struggle with forming secure attachments, which can impact their future relationships (Latif et al., 2021). Thus, understanding the ramifications of trauma is vital for creating informed custody arrangements that consider the holistic needs of children (Husain et al., 2021).

BEST PRACTICES IN CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

To address the implications of family trauma in custody decisions, several best practices have been proposed. First, the incorporation of trauma-informed approaches in legal proceedings is essential. It involves training legal practitioners to recognize signs of trauma and understand its impact on children's development (Rahim et al., 2021). Additionally, multidisciplinary teams—including mental health professionals—should be integrated into the custody evaluation process to provide a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs. Second, increasing public awareness about the importance of mental health and the effects of domestic violence is crucial for reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behaviors among families (Bibi et al., 2021).

Educational campaigns can empower families to seek assistance before trauma escalates, benefiting children's well-being. Finally, policymakers must advocate for legal reforms that prioritize children's safety and mental health over traditional notions of familial integrity. It includes creating clear guidelines for evaluating family environments and ensuring that custody arrangements are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. The literature on family trauma and child custody in Pakistan reveals a pressing need for a more nuanced understanding of how trauma impacts children and influences custody decisions (Saud et al., 2021).

While existing legal frameworks prioritize the welfare of children, the implementation often falls short due to cultural biases, a lack of training among legal practitioners, and inadequate mental health resources. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes trauma-informed practices, public education, and policy reforms. By prioritizing children's mental health and safety, stakeholders can work toward healthier family dynamics and better custody outcomes for children in Pakistan (Imran et al., 2021).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FAMILY TRAUMA AND CHILD CUSTODY IN PAKISTAN

The historical context of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan is rooted in a complex interplay of sociocultural, legal, and economic factors. Following its independence in 1947, Pakistan inherited a legal framework from British colonial rule, including the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, which emphasized the welfare of the child but often lacked specific provisions for addressing family trauma. In traditional Pakistani society, cultural norms prioritize familial integrity, often leading to the minimization of domestic issues such as violence or mental health struggles. Over the decades, increasing urbanization, economic challenges, and changing gender roles have exacerbated familial stressors, resulting in heightened instances of trauma, including domestic violence and substance abuse. These issues have been mainly underreported due to stigma and fear of social ostracism (Forslund et al., 2022).

Legal approaches to custody have evolved slowly, with early practices heavily favoring maternal custody without adequately considering the impacts of trauma. In recent years, there has been a gradual shift towards recognizing the importance of a child-centered approach in custody decisions. However, cultural biases and insufficient training for legal practitioners continue to hinder effective assessments of family dynamics and trauma. Overall, the historical trajectory highlights a need for legal reform and increased awareness of mental health issues, emphasizing the importance of integrating trauma-informed practices into child custody evaluations to ensure the well-being of children in Pakistan (Spearman et al., 2023).

LEADING FAMILY TRAUMA AND CHILD CUSTODY IN PAKISTAN

Family trauma significantly impacts child custody outcomes in Pakistan, where various sociocultural and legal factors intersect. One of the most pressing issues is domestic violence,

which affects a considerable number of families. Research shows that children exposed to violent environments often experience severe emotional and psychological repercussions, such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. Despite laws that prioritize the welfare of the child, custody decisions frequently overlook these traumas, leading to placements that may perpetuate cycles of abuse. Another critical issue is the stigma surrounding mental health. In Pakistani society, mental illness is often misunderstood and stigmatized, resulting in families hesitating to seek help. This reluctance can adversely affect custody proceedings, where a parent's mental health may be scrutinized without a fair evaluation of their overall parenting capabilities (Burgin et al., 2022).

The lack of awareness regarding mental health issues can lead to unjust custody outcomes, with children remaining in unstable environments. Cultural biases also play a pivotal role in custody decisions. Traditionally, maternal custody is preferred, but this can sometimes overlook the safety and emotional needs of the child. There is a tendency to uphold familial integrity over individual well-being, which can result in children being placed with parents who may not provide a nurturing environment. Additionally, societal norms often minimize the importance of assessing fathers' roles and behaviors, leading to custody arrangements that do not prioritize the child's safety (Bargeman et al., 2021).

The training of legal practitioners is another critical area needing attention. Many judges and lawyers lack adequate training in recognizing the signs of family trauma and understanding its implications for child development. This gap can lead to decisions that do not align with the child's best interests, further complicating the issue. Addressing these leading issues in family trauma and child custody in Pakistan requires comprehensive reforms. Emphasizing trauma-informed practices, enhancing public awareness, and improving training for legal professionals can foster better custody outcomes, ultimately prioritizing children's well-being in the face of family challenges (Tay et al., 2021).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF FAMILY TRAUMA AND CHILD CUSTODY IN PAKISTAN

The theoretical context surrounding family trauma and child custody in Pakistan draws from several key frameworks, including attachment theory, trauma-informed care, and socio-ecological models. Attachment Theory posits that early relationships with caregivers significantly shape a child's emotional and psychological development. Children exposed to trauma, such as domestic violence or neglect, may develop insecure attachment styles, which can adversely affect their social relationships and emotional regulation. This theory underscores the importance of considering the child's relational history in custody decisions. Trauma-informed care emphasizes understanding and responding to the effects of trauma in a sensitive and supportive manner. Incorporating this approach in custody evaluations can help legal

practitioners recognize the signs of trauma and its implications for a child's well-being. Proximity arrangements can better align with the child's needs by prioritizing safety and emotional support (Bekaert et al., 2021).

The Socio-ecological Model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the various factors influencing child custody decisions. This model considers individual, relational, community, and societal levels, acknowledging how cultural norms, legal structures, and family dynamics interact to shape trauma experiences and subsequent custody outcomes. In Pakistan, these theories highlight the necessity of adopting a holistic approach that considers both the individual child's needs and the broader sociocultural environment. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, stakeholders can create more informed and effective policies and practices prioritizing children's welfare in custody disputes (Katz et al., 2021).

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY TRAUMA AND CHILD CUSTODY IN PAKISTAN CHALLENGES

- i. **Cultural Stigma:** One of the foremost challenges is the stigma surrounding mental health and domestic violence. Many families avoid seeking help due to fear of social ostracism, which leads to underreporting of trauma. This stigma can hinder proper assessment during custody evaluations, leaving children in potentially harmful environments (Eltanamy et al., 2021).
- ii. **Inadequate Legal Framework:** While the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890 emphasizes the child's welfare, its application often falls short. The legal framework lacks specific provisions for addressing family trauma, and judges frequently lack the training to recognize its signs, resulting in custody decisions that do not prioritize children's best interests (Breen, 2021).
- iii. **Gender Bias:** Cultural norms often favor maternal custody, which can overlook cases where mothers may pose a risk to their children's well-being. Conversely, fathers are sometimes dismissed in custody discussions, regardless of their capacity to provide a safe environment (Forkey et al., 2021).
- iv. **Limited Resources:** Access to mental health services is minimal, particularly in rural areas. This scarcity makes it challenging for families to seek the support needed to address trauma effectively (Arditti & Johnson, 2022).

OPPORTUNITIES

- i. **Awareness and Advocacy:** Growing awareness about mental health and domestic violence is creating a window for advocacy. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups increasingly focus on these issues, promoting education and support systems that can benefit distressed families (Steketee et al., 2021).

- ii. **Legal Reforms:** Existing laws could be amended to better incorporate assessments of family trauma in custody cases. Engaging legal experts, psychologists, and social workers can help develop guidelines that prioritize child welfare (Cuervo, 2023).
- iii. **Training for Legal Practitioners:** Developing training programs for judges and lawyers on trauma-informed approaches can significantly improve the quality of custody evaluations, ensuring that decisions reflect the complexities of family dynamics (Zafar et al., 2022).
- iv. **Multidisciplinary Approaches:** Integrating mental health professionals into custody assessments can provide a holistic view of the child's needs, fostering better outcomes in custody arrangements (Abbas et al., 2023).

DISCUSSION

The intersection of family trauma and child custody in Pakistan presents a multifaceted issue that demands urgent attention. Family trauma, encompassing domestic violence, mental health struggles, and socioeconomic, profoundly affects children's emotional and psychological well-being. As children are often the silent victims in custody disputes, it is essential to prioritize their needs when evaluating custody arrangements. One critical aspect is the cultural stigma surrounding mental health and domestic violence. Many families refrain from disclosing traumatic experiences due to fear of societal judgment, leading to underreporting and insufficient intervention. Consequently, children may remain in environments where they continue to face psychological harm, which can have lasting effects on their development.

The legal framework governing child custody in Pakistan, primarily the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, aims to prioritize the child's welfare. However, the practical application often falls short. Judges frequently lack training in trauma-informed care, leading to decisions that do not fully consider the child's experiences and needs. Moreover, prevailing gender biases can skew custody decisions, placing children in potentially harmful situations. Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for reform. Increased advocacy and awareness about the implications of family trauma can lead to improved support systems for affected families.

Integrating mental health professionals into custody evaluations can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the child's circumstances, ultimately promoting healthier outcomes. Furthermore, legal reforms to enhance family dynamics assessment can create a more balanced approach to custody decisions. By fostering a system that prioritizes children's well-being and safety, stakeholders can work towards breaking the cycles of trauma, ensuring that custody arrangements genuinely reflect the best interests of the child. In summary,

addressing family trauma in custody disputes is vital for fostering a healthier future for children in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The complexities surrounding family trauma and child custody in Pakistan highlight an urgent need for systemic change to better support children's welfare. As society awareness of mental health and domestic violence continues to grow, it is crucial to translate this awareness into actionable reforms within the legal framework governing custody decisions. Current challenges, including cultural stigma, inadequate legal protections, and biases in decision-making, create barriers that can leave children vulnerable in traumatic environments. These issues emphasize the importance of a trauma-informed approach that prioritizes the emotional and psychological well-being of children in custody evaluations. Training legal practitioners to recognize the signs of trauma and consider its implications can lead to more informed and compassionate decisions that serve the child's best interests.

Moreover, integrating multidisciplinary perspectives—such as those of mental health professionals and social workers—into the custody process can provide a more holistic view of family dynamics. This collaborative approach can ensure that all aspects of a child's environment are considered, fostering healthier and safer custody arrangements. The potential for legal reform also offers a pathway to address the systemic issues within the current framework. Advocating for policies that explicitly account for trauma in custody cases can help shift societal norms that prioritize familial integrity over individual safety.

Ultimately, addressing family trauma in custody disputes is not only a legal issue but a moral imperative. By prioritizing the needs of children and fostering supportive environments, Pakistan can take meaningful strides toward breaking cycles of trauma, ensuring that future generations can thrive in safe and nurturing homes. The journey toward reform is challenging, but it is essential for building a society that genuinely prioritizes the well-being of its most vulnerable members—its children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Implement trauma-informed training for legal practitioners:** Provide comprehensive training programs for judges, lawyers, and social workers on recognizing and addressing family trauma, ensuring that a child-centered approach informs custody decisions.
- 2. Enhance mental health services:** Expand access to mental health resources and counseling services for families experiencing trauma, particularly in rural areas, to support both parents and children during custody disputes.

3. **Establish multidisciplinary custody evaluation teams:** Form teams comprising legal experts, psychologists, and social workers to conduct thorough assessments in custody cases, ensuring a holistic understanding of family dynamics and the child's needs.
4. **Revise legal frameworks:** Advocate for legal reforms that explicitly incorporate considerations of family trauma into custody decisions, moving beyond traditional norms to prioritize the safety and well-being of the child.
5. **Promote public awareness campaigns:** Launch campaigns aimed at educating the public about the effects of domestic violence and mental health issues, reducing stigma, and encouraging families to seek help.
6. **Create safe spaces for children:** Establish safe shelters and support systems for children and mothers escaping domestic violence, providing a secure environment during custody evaluations.
7. **Develop support groups:** Facilitate community-based support groups for families dealing with trauma, fostering a sense of community and providing resources for healing and recovery.
8. **Encourage mediation and conflict resolution:** Promote alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, to resolve custody disputes amicably, reducing the adversarial nature of court proceedings.
9. **Strengthen data collection and research:** Invest in research to better understand the prevalence and impact of family trauma on child custody outcomes, informing policy decisions and resource allocation.
10. **Integrate educational programs on family dynamics:** Include curriculum components in schools that educate children and parents about healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and the importance of mental health, fostering a more informed society.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Research on family trauma and child custody in Pakistan faces several limitations. Firstly, there is a significant lack of empirical studies that specifically address the intersection of trauma and custody outcomes, leading to gaps in comprehensive data. Many existing studies focus on general family dynamics without delving into the nuanced impacts of trauma on children. Additionally, cultural stigma surrounding mental health and domestic violence often results in underreporting, making it difficult to gather accurate data on these issues. Furthermore, the legal landscape is continually evolving, rendering findings quickly outdated. Access to mental health services and resources is also limited, particularly in rural areas, hindering the ability to conduct extensive field studies. Finally, language barriers and varying interpretations of trauma

across different cultural contexts may affect the generalizability of research findings. These limitations underscore the need for more targeted and comprehensive studies.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Research on family trauma and child custody in Pakistan has significant implications for policy, practice, and societal awareness. First, findings can inform legal reforms to create a more child-centered approach in custody decisions. By highlighting the effects of trauma on children's well-being, policymakers can develop guidelines that prioritize safety and emotional health. Additionally, the research underscores the necessity for training legal practitioners, including judges and lawyers, in trauma-informed care. It can lead to more compassionate and informed decision-making during custody evaluations. On a societal level, increasing awareness about the impacts of family trauma can reduce stigma and encourage families to seek help, ultimately fostering healthier environments for children. Moreover, findings can support the development of community-based interventions and support systems for affected families, such as counseling services and safe shelters. Overall, robust research in this area can drive systemic changes that protect vulnerable children and promote their well-being in the context of family trauma and custody disputes.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research on family trauma and child custody in Pakistan should focus on several key areas to address existing gaps and improve outcomes for children.

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal research can provide insights into the long-term effects of family trauma on children's emotional and psychological development, particularly about custody arrangements. This approach can help track how early trauma influences later life outcomes.
2. **Cultural Contextualization:** It is essential to explore how cultural beliefs and practices influence perceptions of trauma and custody decisions. Research should examine variations across different regions and communities to understand localized challenges and opportunities.
3. **Impact of Legal Reforms:** Evaluating the effectiveness of recent legal reforms to address trauma in custody cases can provide valuable insights. It includes assessing how changes in laws affect actual custody decisions and the well-being of children.
4. **Intersectionality:** Investigating how factors such as gender, socioeconomic and education intersect with family trauma and custody decisions can help reveal the complexities involved in these cases.

- 5. Community-Based Interventions:** Research should explore the efficacy of community-based support systems and interventions aimed at mitigating trauma and assess their impact on family dynamics and custody outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, J., Aqeel, M., Ling, J., Ziapour, A., Raza, M. A., & Rehna, T. (2023). Exploring the relationship between intimate partner abuses, resilience, psychological, and physical health problems in Pakistani married couples: A perspective from the collectivistic culture. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 38(3), 431-460. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14681994.2020.1851673>
- Abbas, S. S., & Jabeen, T. (2023). Child sexual abuse in Pakistan: Using evidence based social ecological model for explanation and policy formulation. *Community Health Equity Research & Policy*, 43(2), 219-228. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0272684X211013151>
- Arditti, J. A., & Johnson, E. I. (2022). A family resilience agenda for understanding and responding to parental incarceration. *American Psychologist*, 77(1), 56. <https://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/77/1/56/>
- Bargeman, M., Smith, S., & Wekerle, C. (2021). Trauma-informed care as a rights-based “standard of care”: A critical review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 119, 104762. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213420304178>
- Bekaert, S., Paavilainen, E., Shecke, H., Baldacchino, A., Jouet, E., Zablocka-Zytka, L., & Appleton, J. V. (2021). Family members’ perspectives of child protection services, a metasynthesis of the literature. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 128, 106094. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740921001705>
- Bibi, A., Hayat, R., Hayat, N., Zulfiqar, S., Shafique, N., & Khalid, M. A. (2021). Impact of parenting styles on psychological flexibility among adolescents of Pakistan: A cross-sectional study. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-10. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10560-021-00754-z>
- Breen, C. (2021). *The standard of the best interests of the child: A western tradition in international and comparative law* (Vol. 72). Brill. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Zsn7EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=Family+trauma+and+child+custody+in+the+context+of+international&ots=80oHd9-Fxl&sig=aSFwDkih1LnUH2TQQcuMjfOC4jQ>
- Burgin, D., Anagnostopoulos, D., Vitiello, B., Sukale, T., Schmid, M., & Fegert, J. M. (2022). Impact of war and forced displacement on children’s mental health—Multilevel, needs-

- oriented, and trauma-informed approaches. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 31(6), 845-853. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/S00787-022-01974-Z>
- Cuervo, K. (2023). A deeper understanding of child to parent violence (CPV): Personal traits, family context, and parenting. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 67(10-11), 1079-1105. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0306624X211065588>
- Egger, M., Higgins, J. P., & Smith, G. D. (Eds.). (2022). *Systematic reviews in health research: Meta-analysis in context*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Eltanamy, H., Leijten, P., Jak, S., & Overbeek, G. (2021). Parenting in times of war: A meta-analysis and qualitative synthesis of war exposure, parenting, and child adjustment. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(1), 147-160. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1524838019833001>
- Forkey, H., Szilagyi, M., Kelly, E. T., & Duffee, J. (2021). Trauma-informed care. *Pediatrics*, 148(2). https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/148/2/e2021052580/179745?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=TrendMD&utm_campaign=Pediatrics_TrendMD_0
- Forslund, T., Granqvist, P., van IJzendoorn, M. H., Sagi-Schwartz, A., Glaser, D., Steele, M., & Duschinsky, R. (2022). Attachment goes to court: Child protection and custody issues. *Attachment & Human Development*, 24(1), 1-52. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14616734.2020.1840762>
- Gan, J., Xie, L., Peng, G., Xie, J., Chen, Y., & Yu, Q. (2021). Systematic review on modification methods of dietary fiber. *Food Hydrocolloids*, 119, 106872. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodhyd.2021.106872>
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2021). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. *Language Teaching Research*, 13621688211001289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289>
- Husain, M. I., Umer, M., Chaudhry, I. B., Husain, M. O., Rahman, R., Shakoor, S., & Husain, N. (2021). Relationship between childhood trauma, personality, social support and depression in women attending general medical clinics in a low and middle-income country. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 292, 526-533. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165032721005954>
- Imran, N., Bodla, Z. H., Asif, A., & Shoukat, R. (2021). Pakistan's First Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Inpatient Unit: Characteristics of admitted patients and response to treatment over a 7-year period. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 37(2), 305-311. <http://editor.openaccessbook.com/id/eprint/555/>

- Iqbal, M., & Fatmi, Z. (2021). Prevalence of emotional and physical intimate partner violence among married women in Pakistan. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(9-10), NP4998-NP5013. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260518796523>
- Jabeen, T. (2021). Challenges in the Prevention of Child Maltreatment in Pakistan: an Interplay of the Culture and the Context. *International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, 4(4), 421-437. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42448-021-00095-5>
- Katz, C., Priolo Filho, S. R., Korbin, J., Berube, A., Fouche, A., Haffejee, S., & Varela, N. (2021). Child maltreatment in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic: A proposed global framework on research, policy and practice. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 116, 104824. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213420304798>
- Komba, M. M., & Lwoga, E. T. (2020). *Systematic review as a research method in library and information science*. 10.4018/978-1-7998-1471-9.ch005.
- LaBore, K., Ahmed, T., Rizwan-ur-Rashid, & Ahmed, R. (2021). Prevalence and predictors of violence against women in Pakistan. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(13-14), NP7246-NP7263. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260518824652>
- Lakhdar, M. P. A., Farooq, S., Khan, U. R., Parpio, Y., Azam, S. I., Razzak, J., & Kadir, M. M. (2021). Factors associated with child maltreatment among children aged 11 to 17 years in community settings of Karachi, Pakistan, using Belsky Ecological Framework. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(1-2), 297-313. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260517726973>
- Latif, M., Husain, M. I., Gul, M., Naz, S., Irfan, M., Aslam, M., & Naem, F. (2021). Culturally adapted trauma-focused CBT-based guided self-help (CatCBT GSH) for female victims of domestic violence in Pakistan: feasibility randomized controlled trial. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 49(1), 50-61. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/behavioural-and-cognitive-psychotherapy/article/culturally-adapted-traumafocused-cbtbased-guided-selfhelp-catcbt-gsh-for-female-victims-of-domestic-violence-in-pakistan-feasibility-randomized-controlled-trial/9AE54AF2313175446E29B4C1AFAD4ADC>
- LeMasters, K., Bates, L. M., Chung, E. O., Gallis, J. A., Hagaman, A., Scherer, E., & Maselko, J. (2021). Adverse childhood experiences and depression among women in rural Pakistan. *BMC Public Health*, 21, 1-11. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-021-10409-4>

- Nawaz, S., Kiran, A., Shabbir, M. S., & Zamir, A. (2022). A study to analyze the rights and responsibilities of husband and wife relationship in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(1), 139-151. <http://pjmr.org/pjmr/article/view/280>
- Nawaz, S., Kiran, A., Shabbir, M. S., Koser, M., & Zamir, A. (2022). Does domestic violence affect the freedom of women life in Pakistan. *Journal of Public Value and Administrative Insight*, 5(2), 440-454. <https://www.academia.edu/download/104408797/1752.pdf>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., & Moher, D. (2021). Updating guidance for reporting systematic reviews: Development of the PRISMA 2020 statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 134, 103-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.02.003>
- Pawson, R., Greenhalgh, T., Harvey, G., & Walshe, K. (2005). Realist review - A new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 10(1), 21-34. 10.1258/1355819054308530
- Petticrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide*. Blackwell Publishing. 10.1002/9780470754887
- Qamar, A. H., & Faizan, H. F. (2021). Reasons, impact, and post-divorce adjustment: Lived experience of divorced women in Pakistan. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 62(5), 349-373. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10502556.2021.1871840>
- Rahi, S. (2017). Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues, and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences*, 6(2). 10.4172/2162-6359.1000403
- Rahim, S., Bourgaize, C., Khan, M., Matthew, L., & Barron, I. (2021). Child sexual abuse in Pakistan schools: a non-systematic narrative literature review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 30(5), 546-562. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10538712.2021.1901168>
- Rasool, K., Mubashir, M., & Hameed, A. (2024). In the shadow of justice: Custodial torture and human rights violations in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Law, Analysis & Wisdom*, 3, 232. https://heinonline.org/hol-cgibin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/pknjlolw3§ion=46
- Richardson, R. A., Haight, S. C., Hagaman, A., Sikander, S., Maselko, J., & Bates, L. M. (2022). Social support and intimate partner violence in rural Pakistan: A longitudinal investigation of the bi-directional relationship. *SSM-Population Health*, 19, 101173. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352827322001525>
- Saud, M., Ashfaq, A., & Mas'udah, S. (2021). Women's attitudes towards wife beating and its connection with intimate partner violence (IPV): An empirical analysis of a national

- demographic and health survey conducted in Pakistan. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(5), 149-160. <https://repository.unair.ac.id/111161/>
- Siddiqui, S., Soomro, N. N., & Mehboob, Y. (2021). Our generation at risk: Tale of disintegrated families' children in areas of Pakistan-A review. *Sukkur IBA Journal of Educational Sciences and Technologies*, 1(1), 56-66. <https://journal.ibasuk.edu.pk:8089/SIBAJournals/index.php/sjest/article/view/653>
- Spearman, K. J., Hardesty, J. L., & Campbell, J. (2023). Post-separation abuse: A concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 79(4), 1225-1246. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jan.15310>
- Steketee, M., Aussems, C., & Marshall, I. H. (2021). Exploring the impact of child maltreatment and interparental violence on violent delinquency in an international sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(13-14), NP7319-NP7349. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260518823291>
- Tay, A. K., Rees, S., Kareth, M., Mohsin, M., Tam, N., & Silove, D. (2021). Associations between family-level adversity and society-level trauma with emotional and behavioural problems amongst children of West Papuan refugees. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30, 909-920. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00787-020-01569-6>
- Victor, L. (2008). Systematic reviewing in the social sciences: Outcomes and explanation. *Enquire*, 1(1), 32-46. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/documents/enquire/volume-1-issue-1-victor.pdf>
- Zafar, N., Naeem, M., Zehra, A., Muhammad, T., Sarfraz, M., Hamid, H., & Muhammad, N. (2022). Parenting practices, stressors and parental concerns during COVID-19 i Pakistan. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 130, 105393. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213421004622>