



Rapid survey on violence between mothers and daughters

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Community activist interviewing a respondent in Mazar

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1. Introduction

In 2019 Zardozi carried out a rapid survey on gender-based violence experiences by Zardozi clients. The survey reported found that 15% of all abuse experienced by women was from their mothers¹. After discussion with staff and clients it was decided to follow up this finding with a second survey specifically investigating abuse of daughters by their mothers. It was felt that continuing research into this issue would assist Zardozi to understand the environment in which domestic violence develops and to identify family and community level strategies to counter it.

'In .. rural and urban areas [of Afghanistan] .. corporal punishment is accepted as a normal way to parent children. As such, using violence to discipline children is commonplace².

AREU's 2008 study on domestic violence towards children found that the majority of parents considered violence as a normal mode of disciplining children. It also found that although an increasing number of parents felt that violence was not acceptable, primarily because of the long term psychological effect on the child, they continued to accept it (AREU 2008).

The same study found that adults gave two reasons why children experience such strong discipline: firstly parents fear that without violent discipline their children will not grow up as moral and well behaved adults and secondly parents do not know any other way of managing the behaviour of their children. Parents were reported as having strong ambitions for their children, wanting them to have an education so that their lives would be better than that of their parents, and they believed that the only way to make a child study well was to make them afraid of adults. They also fear that if children are not fearful of punishment they will not learn to abide by cultural rules and values by the time they are adults in which case, particularly girls, they risk much harsher punishments.

Several studies have found that women are more likely to slap, punch or beat their children^{2, 3}. This may be related to the fact that violence against children seems to take two forms - deliberate punishment for a misdemeanour and lashing out in frustration and anger. Women spend more time with their children and are therefore more likely to become tired and frustrated and verbally or physically abuse their children.

Other studies have underlined the damaging long term effects of domestic violence, including violence towards children, on children's mental health, assessing it as more damaging than other socio economic and war-related stressors⁴.

¹ Gender based Violence Survey, Zardozi, December 2018

² D J Smith, LOVE, FEAR and DISCIPLINE: Everyday violence toward children in Afghan families. AREU Issues Paper Series, Feb 2008

³ L W R Pilogo, C R Echavez, Gender-based Violence among IDP children in Kabul: Measures to take. AREU, August 2018

⁴ C, Panter-Brick, A Goodman, W. Tol & M. Eggerman, Mental health and childhood adversities: A longitudinal study in Kabul, Afghanistan. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 50 (4). 2011

2. Key Findings

- 73% of respondents reported experiencing violence from their mothers whereas only 61% of respondents reported perpetrating violence against their own daughters
- Mothers who had been hit themselves were more likely to hit their own daughters (23%)
- 51% of respondents agreed that they are mirroring their mother's behaviour
- 66% of respondents reported experiencing long term negative effects of maternal violence whereas only 45% of respondents felt that their own violence would have a longer term effect on their daughters

3. Background

Zardozi has been working for more than a decade with illiterate, poor women in four urban and semi-urban areas of Afghanistan, facilitating them to establish and maintain micro and small businesses. Working with these women presents a number of challenges, for example the women are often so isolated that one of the first tasks Zardozi undertakes is to physically take them to visit local markets (which they may never have seen before despite living locally) in order to understand which products are in demand and to highlight the pressures that retailers face in terms of price and quality of product.

"I am requesting all mothers do not do violence with your daughters, as it will have negative effects in her future life for a long time"

Comment from a mother who admitted to slapping and shouting at her own daughters

Business support for Zardozi target women is provided through community-based business centres - women only spaces where, in return for a small fee, women can access business services ranging from micro finance to technical support.

So far the Zardozi programme has supported 7,801 women in the urban and semi-urban areas of 4 provinces (Kabul, Mazar, Herat and Jalalabad). 3,681 women out of the 7,801 continue to actively benefit from services provided through community business centres, 59% of these women earning more than Afs 1,000 per month.

Grass roots experience over many years has taught Zardozi how to effectively support poor women to establish and maintain their own successful micro or small enterprise. In the process, Zardozi has also come to understand that women who are earning their own income gain not only self-confidence but also a greater capacity to recognise and stand up for their rights. In the past few years Zardozi has started selecting community volunteer activists from amongst these confident and successful entrepreneurs and training them to take action within their own communities on issues of concern to women. These activists, through their dedication and commitment, have demonstrated that empowered women can also be effective in improving the lives of other women in their communities.

4. Survey Methodology

4.1. Sample size and selection criteria

4.1.1 Selection criteria

30 clients (women working with the Zardozi Programme) meeting the selection criteria were selected randomly from the ID master lists in each region making a total of 120 respondents.

Criteria for respondent selection:

- Married
- Middle aged
- Clients who had not answered a Zardozi questionnaire on GBV before
- Clients who had daughter(s) who are school age or older

4.1.2 Characteristics of selected respondents

Table 4.1.1 Average number of daughters per respondent

Regions	Average number
Kabul	2
Herat	3
Jalalabad	3
Mazar	3
Total	3

Table 4.1.2 Age range of respondents' daughters

Age range (years)	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	Total	
					No.	%
1-3	0	0	0	2	2	1%
4-7	5	11	12	3	31	15%
8-12	9	21	14	7	51	25%
13-17	9	12	17	12	50	24%
18-25	10	12	12	21	55	27%
> 25	5	1	7	3	16	8%
	38	57	62	48	205	100%

On average respondents had 3 daughters, the majority of whom (59%) were over the age of 12 years.

4.2 Questionnaires, data collection and data management

The questionnaire was developed by programme staff, discussed and then trialled with community activist women. Activists, together with regional M&E staff were trained in

All mothers should try to eradicate violence among family and community, because it is very worse and its negative impact will be for a long time
 Survey respondent
 February 2020

the survey methodology by the M&E Manager. The survey was conducted in late February and early March 2020.

5. Findings

5.1 Maternal violence experienced by respondents

5.1.1 Types of maternal violence experienced

Table 5.1.1 Mother daughter violence experienced by respondents

Regions	Violence experienced		Violence not experienced	
	Number	%	Number	%
Kabul	21	70%	9	30%
Herat	30	100%	0	0%
Jalalabad	17	57%	13	43%
Mazar	20	67%	10	33%
Total	88	73%	32	27%

Table 5.1.1 shows that 73% of respondents reported experiencing violence from their mothers during their childhood and/or youth.

Table 5.1.2 Number of respondents experiencing different types of maternal violence

Type of violence	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	Total	% of Total
Humiliated me in front of others	7	3	0	0	10	10%
Shouted at me	5	15	9	13	42	43%
Slapped or hit me	12	14	17	2	45	46%
					97	99%

Table 5.1.2 shows that the majority of maternal violence was reported as consisting of mothers hitting their daughters or shouting at them.

5.1.2 Age of respondents when experiencing maternal violence s

Table 5.1.3 Age of respondents at the time of the violence

Age of respondent	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
School child	4	7	5	9	25	28%
Young woman/ unmarried	17	23	12	12	64	72%
	21	30	17	21	89	100%

Table 5.1.3 indicates that the great majority of the respondents reported that they were young, unmarried women at the time of the violence.

5.1.3 Frequency of maternal violence experienced

Table 5.1.4 Frequency of maternal violence experienced by respondents

Frequency of maternal violence	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
Infrequently	2	9	0	10	21	24%
Regularly	15	17	13	9	54	61%
Always	4	4	4	1	13	15%
	21	30	17	20	88	100%

Table 5.1.4 indicates the majority of respondents reported experiencing regular violence from their mothers.

5.1.4 Explanations for maternal anger as given by respondents

The following comments were made by respondents when asked why their mothers behaved badly towards them. The majority of the comments can be described as punishment for not behaving dutifully. For girls, parents may be particularly fearful that if their daughters do not learn to be obedient they may suffer once married.

Explanations relating to undutiful behaviour

- When I delayed the housework and do not performed properly
- When I was late in cooking, adding more salt or made a mistake
- My father was hitting me even when I was late in tea making
- When I was weaving carpet my mother become unhappy that I didn't do housework, when I was doing housework my father was becoming sad that is why I wasn't weaving carpet
- Because I don't like to feed cows and hens
- Always insisted that do not go to school and do housework
- When I didn't listen to her words
- When I went outside home for playing
- When I fight with my brothers and sisters
- When I was talking with my fiancé she was getting angry and was shouting at me.
- When I was not going to school
- When I didn't wake up for praying.
- When I had woven the carpet wrong or the days I had woven less
- They wanted me to get married

Explanations relating to mother's own problems

- When she was angry
- Poverty and society concern made her angry

Other explanations

- Nothing, but she were cruel
- She was my step mother and she was always hitting me

5.1.5 Short term effect of maternal anger as described by respondents

The following comments were made by respondents when asked what they felt at the time of experiencing the unsympathetic or violent behaviour of their mothers.

Emotional response and lowering of self image

- Becoming sad and crying
- I was sad and couldn't study
- It made me sad and cry, I don't want to eat anymore
- Reducing my self - confidence
- Had negative effects, I felt that I am the servant
- Sad and depression
- I couldn't enjoy from my childhood
- Of course negative effects and I was thinking when I become mother I will never repeat it
- I was sad that why I am living in such kind of home

Resentment and fear

- It had bad effect even that they married me underage
- I was living in a bad situation and I thought that cruel is on me
- Scare and hate of her
- I always scared of my mother

Other

- No I didn't care about it
- I was tried to change myself to do the housework properly
- I was trying to do my best, but I was too young

5.1.6 Long term effect of maternal anger as described by respondents

Table 5.1.5 Number and percentage of respondents reporting long term negative effects of maternal violence

	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
Long term negative effects	10	24	13	11	58	66%
No long term effects	9	5	3	10	27	31%
Unknown	1	1	1	0	3	3%
	20	30	17	21	88	100%

The following comments were made by respondents when asked what they felt were the long term effects of the unsympathetic or violent behaviour of their mothers.

Emotional response and lowering of self image

- Sometimes I am angry without any reason
- It had bad effect on me that made my life complicated

- It had good and bad effects, good was that I learned how to work and bad was making me sad
- Now I am always sad and angry
- Still I am effected of that times and it feels in my behaviour
- I did not study still suffering and made me depressed
- Feeling alone without any support
- I thought that I am as a servant in my home
- Decreasing and losing of my self-confidence
- lose self-confidence and didn't have progress in my live
- It affected me very badly, I don't have a happy life with my husband now
- It effected my life very badly because still my sister in law taunts me
- The violence discouraged me a lot even now at my in law's family can't speak with confidence

Other

- It do not have any effect on me
- It affect me to dropout by primary education
- I was unhappy on that time, but fortunately now I am happy with my life partner

The responses related to both the short term and long term effects of maternal violence clearly indicate that the majority of respondents feel that the unsympathetic and violent behaviour of their mother significantly affected their mental health, self-confidence and happiness both at the time and for the rest of their lives.

5.2 Current mother and daughter violence

5.2.1 Types of maternal violence perpetrated by respondents on their own daughters

Table 5.2.1 Details of respondents' own behaviour with daughters

Respondents' behaviour with daughters					Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
Respondent has ever behaved badly	20	27	10	17	74	62%
Respondent has never behaved badly	10	3	20	13	46	38%
Total	30	30	30	30	120	100%

Table 5.2.1 shows that 62% of respondents reported being violent to their own daughters which is 10% less than respondents reported experiencing from their own mothers (73% - See Table 5.1.1). The difference however may be due to under reporting by respondents when owning up to their own violent behaviour.

5.2.2 Age of respondents' own daughters at the time of the violence

Table 5.2.2 Age of respondents' daughters at the time of the violence

Age of respondent	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
Pre-school (1-7 years)	5	11	12	5	33	16%
School child (8-17 years)	18	33	31	19	101	49%
Young woman/ unmarried	15	13	19	24	71	35%
	21	30	17	21	89	100%

Table 5.2.2 indicates that respondents reported perpetrating violence against their own daughters at a younger age than the age at which their mothers were violent to them (see Table 5.1.3). Unfortunately however the data collected is not sufficiently comparable between the two tables to be able to draw any firm conclusions.

Table 5.2.3 Frequency of respondents' own violent behaviour towards daughters

Frequency of maternal violence	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
Infrequently	3	6	0	2	11	15%
Regularly	16	17	9	15	57	77%
Always	1	4	1	0	6	8%
	20	27	10	17	74	100%

Comparing Tables 5.2.3 and 5.1.4 it seems that respondents reported that although daily ('always') mother daughter violence has decreased, regular violence has increased.

5.2.3 Explanations given by respondents as to what makes them behave violently towards their daughters

The following comments were made by respondents when asked why they had behaved badly towards their own daughters.

Undutiful behaviour explanations - housework

- They are not responsible towards house work
- When she was not weaving carpet I was slapping her
- She do not perform the house work properly
- Because they didn't care of their younger sister and brothers
- She was not studying and praying

Undutiful behaviour that is against family and community norms and standards

- She is making noise
- They are annoying their little brothers and sisters
- She is very talkative
- When they are rude with elders
- When they are not listening to me.
- They didn't come home early when they got off from school

School work related explanations

- When they were not studying then I am shouting on her
- When they were not studying and playing game
- She is not studying but is fighting with sister and brother

Relating the behaviour to respondents own mental health and other issues

- Because I am sick my own problem create such issues
- I am always sad and angry
- I was angry on someone else and I shouted on her
- I was hurt because they don't have father
- I have back pain problem when they don't work I get angry
- I have depression problem and I get angry
- Because I don't have job, and get angry on them
- Sometime I get angry and made an excuse
- I have depression problem and I get angry

The difference between explanations offered by respondents for their behaviour towards their own daughters and their explanations of their mothers' violent behaviour is marked. When explaining why they are violent to their own daughters, respondents are far more likely to put their behaviour down to depression, illness and other stresses such as widowhood and unemployment. When explaining their mother's behaviour towards themselves they were more likely to mention their own failure to perform house work or to fulfil other duties as the source other their mother's irritation.

Table 5.2.4 Relationship between experiencing and perpetrating violence, percentage of women

Maternal violence experienced	Violence perpetrated on daughters				
	Hit	Shouted	Humiliated	No violence	Total
Humiliated	8%	46%	8%	38%	100%
No violence	9%	44%	9%	38%	100%
Shouted	14%	46%	0%	40%	100%
Hit	23%	30%	10%	38%	100%

Table 5.2.4 indicates a relationship between experiencing maternal violence and perpetrating it. The higher percentage of respondents reporting hitting their daughters was recorded against those respondents who had themselves been hit by their mothers. The effect on women of other types of violence appear from their mothers appears to be evenly spread between the types of violence which they perpetrate on their daughters.

5.2.4 Similarities between maternal behaviour between the generations as perceived by respondents

Table 5.2.4 Respondents' opinion as whether their own behaviour mirrors their mothers' behaviour

Regions	Agreed		Disagreed	
	Number	%	Number	%

Regions	Agreed		Disagreed	
	Number	%	Number	%
Kabul	14	46%	6	20%
Herat	20	66%	7	23%
Jalalabad	2	6%	8	26%
Mazar	8	26%	22	74%
Total	44	51%	43	49%

Table 5.2.4 demonstrates that respondents were almost equally divided between those who felt that they were behaving as their mothers did and those who did not.

5.2.5 Respondent explanations as to how their behaviour differs from that of their mothers

- Because she hit us, but I am not, just I am shouting
- As we were listening to our parents
- Because my daughters are not working
- Because time is now changed, it is new generation and I am trying that she should study more
- Because I have a bad experience of my past
- Because I was going through a very difficult situation I don't want that to be repeated to my daughters
- Because I have depression

"All mothers should do good behave with their daughters and help them in solving of problems and let them to complete their education as their brothers and should know that a daughter also have some right, my mother never did violence against me because I was the only daughter of my family"

Respondent's comment
February 2020

The explanations given by respondents as to why they are violent towards their daughters involve more self justification than their explanations about their mothers. Their reasons are divided between feeling that their daughter deserved abuse for unfilial and/or idle behaviour, to reiterating that they were unable to be patients because of their own poor mental health and only finally saying that they want to preserve their daughters from their own experience of maternal violence and its consequences.

5.2.6 Daughters' reaction to their mother's behaviour

Below are some examples of comments made concerning daughter's reaction to her mother's violent behaviour

- We both becoming sad, and not talking with each other
- She is crying, her body is shaking and coming for my hug
- She is going away and escaping
- She in not affected by my behaviour she is doing whatever she wants
- She is smiling and saying you're right
- They are becoming quiet and sad
- They cry and don't talk with me

5.2.7 Participants' opinion on the longer term effect of their behaviour on their daughters

Table 5.2.6 Participants' opinion as to whether their behaviour will have a longer term effect on their daughters

Regions	Agreeing on long term effect		Not agreeing on long term effect	
	Number	%	Number	%
Kabul	8	27	12	40
Herat	21	84	4	16
Jalalabad	1	3	9	30
Mazar	8	27	22	73
Total	38	45	47	55

5.3 Respondents' advice to mothers concerning their behaviour towards their daughters

Respondents were asked what they would advise mothers about how to behave towards their daughters; their comments are given below.

Table 5.3.1 Type of recommendations given by respondents regarding maternal violence

Recommendation	Number of respondents by region				Total	
	Kabul	Herat	Jalalabad	Mazar	No.	%
To bring up their children properly without violence	19	20	20	21	80	67%
Mentioned the rights of girls	1	1	8	8	18	15%
Mentioned the long term effects of violence on mental health	8	9	2	4	23	19%

Table 5.3.1 shows a high proportion of respondents mentioning the mental health aspects of violence, presumably stemming from personal experience. Jalalabad respondents were more likely to mention girls' rights than in other regions. A high proportion of all respondents mentioned that violence is bad.

Examples of comments concerning the long term effect of violent behaviour

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am requesting all mothers do not do violence with their daughters, as it will have negative effects in her future life for a long time |
|--|
- Violence is not good and it has bad effects in the future life of the girls, they will become sick and depress
 - Violence is not good it has bad effects on her future and her self - confidence will be decrease and will not defence herself in future
 - Mothers should not try to humiliate their daughters as their self- confidence will be reduce and will become depressed

- I am kindly requesting from all mothers never do violence against her children because they are the new generation of this country and have a reflective impact on their children

Comments concerning the role of parents in guiding children

- Mothers should have good behaviour with her daughters and act like advisers, as they are young and need good behaviour and guidance
- Mothers should be friendly and close with her children, children, should not afraid from her mother, and they should share her life issues easily and with confidence
- Mothers should be patient to her children as mothers are the role model for their children they will learn from her mother behaviour

Comments concerning hitting children

- Hitting is not good and parents should avoid it
- I advise all mothers do not do violence against their daughters because when I did it so I get embarrass very soon
- Proper use of awareness session will be effective in eliminating violence against mother and daughter, I hope mothers consider these points
- the society is changing so let's be updated and get lesson from the past and don't repeat it again

Comments regarding the rights of girls

- We must have respect to our daughters
- We must have same behaviour with son and daughters
- Everyone should have the concept of equality to both daughters and sons regarding getting education so they don't face any problem in their daily life
- All mothers must do good behaviour with their daughters and should let their daughters to get married with their choice to have a happy life

6. Lessons learned for Zardozi

- Although respondents spoke out against maternal violence referring to the long term negative effect their own experiences had had on their mental health, 61% of them continue to abuse their daughters. More awareness is needed on finding ways to assist mothers not to abuse their daughters
- Although 75% of respondents mentioned the negative long terms effects of maternal violence, yet only 45% felt that their own abusive behaviour would have a long term effect on their daughters. More awareness is needed on bringing women to a realisation that any form of violence towards their daughters is likely to be destructive
- The women who had experienced the most violence (hitting) from their mothers were more likely to hit their own daughters. It is important to pass this information on to the women so that it may be useful in reducing levels of maternal violence

7. Conclusions

The survey results show that although people accept violence against children many, probably a growing number, do not find it acceptable. Given the strength of feeling against violence towards daughters shown by the final comments it is reasonable to suggest that female community leaders would be motivated and sincere in trying to change attitudes towards disciplining children. Providing information on other ways to discipline children and forums where practical details and feedback on disciplining can be exchanged would go some way to undermining the mindset that insists that making children fear adults is the only way to ensure that they become moral and well-behaved adults who succeed in life.

It is possible that bringing the issue of violence against children and particularly girls, into the open for discussion might have the added benefit of providing an opportunity to change attitudes towards all domestic violence. As mentioned in the Zardozi 2019 survey report, violence against girls especially by their mothers may be an effective place to start a discussion on GBV in that, if men think that women are also to blame for violence they may be more likely to be accepting of discussions on the issue.

Psychologists in the developed world report that tension between mothers and daughters has two fundamental reasons: firstly it relates to changes in the role of women between the mother's and the daughter's generations which means that mothers fear the freedoms that their daughters crave. Secondly, when women are silenced - when no one in the family asks what a mother is feeling, thinking and needing, the mother herself does not learn how to ask these questions of her daughter. When women are emotionally neglected, it sets mothers and daughters up to fight over who gets to be emotionally supported in their relationship. If women have more understanding of the level of their own emotional deprivation they may find it easier to listen to their daughters which may lead to a better understanding and less frustration and violence.

Annex 1 Questionnaire

Mother Daughter Violence Survey - Questionnaire

Clients ID		Date of joining to Zardozi	
Clients Name		Survey Date	
A	Maternal violence		
A1	Did your mother ever behave badly to you when you were a girl?	Yes	No
A2	What kind of thing did she do?		
	Humiliated you in front of others	Shouted at you	Slapped you
			Hit you in any other way
			Other (please specify)
A3	What age were you at the time? <i>(multiple response is possible)</i>		
	school child	young woman /unmarried	Other
A4	How often did this happen?	1 time	2 times
		Sometimes	Usually
			Always
A5	Why did you mother do this kind of thing? What made her angry like this?		
A6	What effect did this have on you at the time		
A7	What kind of effect do you think it has had on you in your life		
B	Current mother daughter violence		
B1	Do you have daughters	Yes	No
B2	How many daughters do you have?		
B2	What age are your daughters?		
	1-3	4-7	8-12
			13-17
			18-25
			Older than 25
B2	Do you ever behave badly with them?		
	Humiliate them in front of others	Shout at them	Slap them
			Hit them in any other way
			Other (please specify)
B3	How often has this happened?	1 time	2 times
		Sometimes	Usually
			Always
B4	What age were they at the time? <i>(multiple response is possible)</i>		
	1-3	4-7	8-12
			13-17
			18-25
			Older than 25
B5	Why did you get angry with them, what makes you behave badly with them?		
B6	Do you think you are behaving to them like your mother behaved to you?		
B7	If you are not behaving like your mother, why is that		
B8	How do your daughters react when you are angry with them		
B9	Do you think it will have any longer term effect on them		

C	Advice to reduce mother daughter violence	
C1	What advice do you have to try and support mothers not to be violence towards their daughters	