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Silent Sufferers: Unspoken Psycho-social Struggles of Adults in Conflict-ridden Households

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Abstract

Family is known to be a place related to peace, but when that place remains filled with problems, it affects people's thoughts, emotions, and mental health. Mostly, adults don't share their problems with others, remain silent, and endure everything quietly, particularly in conflict-ridden families. For this purpose, the study aimed at exploring the issues of adolescents in conflict-ridden families. Ten in-depth interviews were taken from young adults who faced parental conflicts in their lives. The selection criteria were adults aged 18 years and older, having conflict in the family, and willing to participate on a voluntary basis. Thematic analysis was done. The findings revealed that the homes where there is always conflict affect adults' mental health and social well-being. This study highlighted how social stigma, culture, and norms discouraged adults from expressing their emotions and thoughts to others and stopped them from getting help. The results of this study showed that the adults who faced all the conflicts should be supported. If we make the environment open to communication in our homes and give awareness about mental health, then the emotional well-being can be catered. This study emphasizes breaking the silence and providing psychological assistance to the conflict-ridden families.

Keywords: Family Conflicts, Adults, Mental Health, Stress, Depression, Silence, Social Well-being.



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Introduction

Family is considered the most important social unit where individuals learn values, norms, and roles that shape their identity and guide their behavior in society (Giddens, 2006). But when families are in a state of unceasing confrontation, they cannot ensure emotional protection and well-being (Ulianova et al., 2025). In many households, especially those rooted in collectivist societies like Pakistan, adults silently suffer from the psychological effects of these conflicts (Becker, 2023). Research has studied the effects of family conflict on children and married couples, yet the emotional and social challenges of other adult family members receive insufficient attention. There is a need to study the unspoken psychosocial challenges adults face when living in households with conflict. The toxic environment affects unmarried siblings and grown-up children and extended family members who typically lack opportunities to express their pain. The emotional weight of these individuals stays concealed because society forces them to maintain family silence and loyalty despite the harm it causes. Social expectations compel these individuals to conceal their emotions because they must maintain family loyalty, even when the family causes harm (Bedi, 2024; Eichelberger-Searcy, 2025).

Research shows that fights that remain unresolved produce serious emotional and mental health outcomes. O'Hara (2024) finds that having family conflict experiences makes people emotionally insecure, and they experience anxiety and behavioral problems. In South Asia, cultural norms such as maintaining family honor and hiding emotions further complicate these issues (Wyatt, 2024). Socially isolated and confused, adult non-conflict parties commonly carry the stress burden of the household and are therefore indirectly affected by the conflict (Khan and Rahman, 2018).

Conflict theory reveals that families may become a source of loss of equality in power distribution, a factor that leads to silence and stress, especially for people who lack power and remain silent (Giddens, 2006). This theory makes us realize that the plights of the adults are not personal as they are also constructed by society and culture. It also shows us how this silence for protecting family honor or financially depending on others can make it harder for the person to speak up or leave harmful situations.

The discrimination of power affects the people of the home with less power and position. In this environment, the adults hide their problems and emotions, which can be a cause of long-term mental illness and social anxiety (Brown, 2024). These experiences are not individualistic; it is also related to society's rules, cultural customs, and the family system. When silence is considered a way of honor, and the people are financially dependent on others, it can make them more frustrated (Becker, 2023). This research not only explains these social thoughts and conditions of adults, but it also explains why these problems are increasing again and again in homes and how these problems are transferring from generation to generation.

The main goal of this research is to understand the psycho-social effects on adults in conflict-ridden households. This study focused on the homes where conflicts are common, and they affect the emotional state, identity, social relationships, and daily life. The culture, family expectations, and financial dependence were also studied to look at the ways of understanding. The following are the research questions of the study:

1. What are the psycho-social struggles faced by the adults who live in houses filled with conflicts and arguments?
2. How does the dysfunction of the family affect the role of the family as a primary social agent?

3. What role does societal stigma play in silencing the emotional struggles of individuals' lives in homes where there are always conflicts?
4. What are the long-term social consequences of growing up in a household where it is normal to fight?

Literature Review

Family is a significant factor in human values and identity as well as emotional well-being (Giddens, 2006). However, under the circumstances of constant conflict in families, such a role may be harmed and result in emotional and psychological problems, particularly in adults. A number of researchers across the world have demonstrated the influence of family issues on the mental health of an individual. To illustrate, Cummings and Davies (2002) provided an example that an unending dispute between parents would be detrimental to emotional development of individuals of every age. Laursen and Collins (2009) have been able to discover in the west that recurrent negative domestic experiences may cause long-term anxiety, social misfortunes and problems with personal identity. On the same note, Goel and Kumar (2024). mentioned that conflict in the family in the long term may be experienced as a significant emotional wound, and relationships and emotional healing can be challenging. Several adults who have been brought up in war torn families usually struggle to express their feelings. They may get accustomed to remaining silent even in cases where they are highly hurt.

The case is trickier in South Asians cultures. Due to the tradition in the family, the value given to family respect, it is common to find that people do not discuss their problems at home. Research indicates that this silence may be detrimental to the mental health. It also turned out that there is a tendency among Pakistani middle-class families to conceal their emotions, lack confidence, and have vague roles (Ahmed and Fatima, 2022). According to Khan and Rehman (2018), young adults who live in urban Pakistan are stressed and lonely due to the inability to discuss family problems openly. Qureshi and Sheikh (2020) also demonstrated that the disregard of mental health in Pakistani families leads to the growth of emotional pressure, particularly on adults who must remain silent and obedient. The importance of such families is that in these situations, they want the people to remain quiet to preserve the peace even to the point of concealing their emotions. This may result into emotional stress in the long run.

Although studies in this field are on the rise, a lot of gaps exist. The vast majority of the research is devoted to children or to married couples, whereas there is less information about the adult population living with or empathically attached to their families. In South Asia, particularly, in the context of Pakistan, there is a lack of studies to comprehend the influence of culture, financial reliance, and generational expectations on the mental health of adults (Rehman, Iqbal, and Malik, 2021). Most families, more so our culture, require individuals to learn not to discuss family issues out of the household. This brings silence when dealing with critical emotional conflicts.

In case of communication deficiency and making it a habit to conceal their feelings, it kills their emotions. These adult people who cannot release their anger or stress are hurting on the inside. These repressed emotions progressively turn them into depressed people, and they experience anxiety and panic attacks. When they fail to receive a secure space to express and communicate, they begin to become isolated and shun social gatherings. It is also this internal suffering that impacts their work and education (Nangia, 2023; Verhaar et al., 2022).

The people who live in those homes where conflict is common find it very difficult for them to get leadership roles or convey their opinion with proper self-confidence, especially in a job or career. That's why their performance at work is poor, and they don't work with full attention and interest. The long-term tension of family problems builds fear inside them. Because of this fear, they get trust issues. They mostly remain silent because they think that when they share their family problems with others, people will judge them or disrespect them (Roy & Maurya, 2026; Menyolla, & Huwae, 2026).

When the emotional needs of people are ignored, and there is always a fear of conflict in the home, the people who are living there will find it very difficult to face difficulties healthily. When these adults have no one to help in these situations, then they apply the wrong ways, like hiding their emotions, pretending that everything is good, or sometimes taking drugs for temporary satisfaction (Aliyah et al., 2022). The Importance of Family Support in Mental Wellbeing: The Impact of Dependency, Disharmony, and Inability to Address Mental Health Issues. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(2), 99-106.

. Sadly, the fact is that these problems are not only limited to them, but they also transform their generations. Attitudes like silence, hiding pain, and social isolation can be transmitted to the generations, and they also experience these problems in their lives (Duda & Podkowińska, 2024; Ingabire, 2022).

The silence is worse when mental health is considered a taboo or a manifestation of weakness. A lot of adults in families where conflicts are a daily occurrence would keep their pain secret because of the social stigma attached to it or the fear of being misconstrued by other people. According to Hofstede (2001), Pakistan, being a collectivist society value to preserve the family harmony and honor. Such cultural expectations make individuals learn to stay quiet despite the fact that it severely damages their health. This thought is also held by the theory of psychosocial development as proposed by Erikson (1963). He had proposed that emotional conflicts which remain unresolved during the earlier stages of life may result in confusion and lack of security at the adult stage. Consequently, persons might develop low self-esteem and emotional instability which impacts their work and personal life.

In addition, Parsons (1955) and Turner (2010) maintained that the family is not just a socializing institution but it is in fact a setup which creates personality and social behaviour. Once this framework is destabilized due to conflicts, it directly disrupts emotional balance as well as the society functions. The adults who grow up in families where fights and quarrels are the order of the day find it hard to establish relationships and retain stability in their social roles.

Emotional problems are very likely to be swept under the carpet in societies where mental health is still regarded as a taboo. Majority of the individuals do not want to share their problems as they are not financially stable to pursue therapy or they fear stigmatization. This culture compels them to remain silent and accept it and not voice their opinions whenever they receive assistance. It is a need in such an environment and no healthy way to stay silent. Gradually, the majority of adult's experience normal pain and do not comprehend how this pain is going to influence their life (Coleman, 2024; Schorr and Goldner, 2023).

In order to assist these adults who have been living in such conflict-ridden families, one needs to put him/herself in their shoes. It must organize awareness campaigns, school programs and family counseling in order to provide them with support. The silence will be broken by open communication at homes and motivating people to share feelings and emotions. Researchers

should be able to pay full attention to the experience, and this is possible by use of one-on-one interviews, hence, it will enable them to listen to people and make them heal.

The already studied researchers demonstrate that family conflict can severely hurt the mental and physical well-being of an individual. Majority of the studies that have been conducted before are entrenched in Western society where family structure and culture is different. Little emphasis is given to adults of South Asian origin, particularly, Pakistan where silence and family honor are significant in lives of people. This research is aimed at bridging this gap because it will involve listening to such adults who are silently suffering in their homes where conflicts always arise. Their pain is not just significant to heal them, but to create a more emotional and socially healthy society.

Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher employed the interpretative school of thought to utilize the qualitative research design to understand the unspoken psycho-social lives of adults in conflict-ridden families. The method of sampling in this study was purposive, where the members were chosen depending on their experience in residing in homes where conflicts are continuously experienced, since they are capable of providing valuable information to the study topic. Adult persons who have or still live in homes that are full of conflicts were considered as the target population of this research. These fights may be verbal, emotional or physical. The participants were primarily students in various universities. The selection criteria were adults aged 18 years and older, having conflict in the family, willing participation on a voluntary basis, informed consent, and the ability to withdraw.

The data collection tool was the semi-structured interviews. This tool is flexible and the researcher can pose follow up questions that are subject to the response of the participants. It served to build a comfortable environment where participants were able to give their experiences without any form of bias (Seidman, 2013). The respondent did the interviews in Urdu because it was more comfortable, and transcribed the interviews into English. Part of the interviews were face-to-face and the other was in audio calls, based on the preference and availability and comfort of the respondent. The interviews will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. All the participants were informed in advance regarding the aim of the study, confidentiality and withdrawal rights. Consent to record all interviews was made in audio form.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the data. This approach contributed to finding similar patterns, meanings, and emotional expressions between the interviews. The transcripts of the interviews were transcribed at the first stage, the data were read several times at the second stage, and the third stage was the coding and further grouping of the data into categories. Next identify key themes and finally analyze the findings.

Ethical Consideration

During data collection, all the ethical principles were observed. The participants were informed of the purpose of the research and signed verbal and written consent prior to the interview. Their names were not made known. The research did not do any form of judgment and did not pressurize the respondents by asking them judgmental questions. The participants were informed that they were not obligated to respond to any question or even drop out. The emotional sensitivity was adhered to, and in case any of the participants experienced distress or sorrow, the conversation was put on hold.

Results

Socio-Demographic Character of the Respondents

There were ten respondents in this research. The age of the participants was between 18 and 26 years, which is a representation of young adults in various levels of education and early adulthood. All the respondents possessed varying education levels, which were F.Sc., FA and BS in fields like literature, English, and software engineering. The respondents were native to Lahore. The group size was between 3-7 siblings. Other respondents were the eldest children in their families with some at the middle or young age.

Siblings' ages were different, with some still attending school or college and others already married or employed. Parents' ages ranged from the 40s to the 50s. The educational levels of mothers ranged from no formal education (03) to three to 5th grade, 3 at the intermediate level, and completion of a BS degree (1). The education status of fathers shows that three had a 5th-grade education, three had an intermediate level of education, and four fathers had a graduate degree. The duration of parents' marriages was 17 to 30 years. Family structures varied among respondents; some lived in nuclear families (4), while others were part of joint (5) or extended families (1) that included uncles, aunts, and cousins.

Family Conflicts and Domestic Violence

The respondents of the study reported frequent fights at home between the parents. These frequent fights give rise to emotional tension in the family that particularly affects the youngsters. The respondents of the study said that after witnessing these fights since childhood, made them believe that such behavior is normal in families. As one of the respondents said, *"Since childhood, I have seen my parents fighting. It became so normal that silence feels strange now."*

The constant shouting and the threats of separation made their life stressful, as one of the respondents said, *"Almost every week our parents argued and discussed separation."* Growing up in this environment, which is filled with anger and instability, left long-lasting effects on the respondents.

After witnessing these continuous fights and physical violence, the respondents face difficulties in forming their own relationships. These worst experiences made them insecure about marriage, and they developed trust issues in their daily life. One of the respondents said, *"I saw my father beating my mother; that image never left my mind. I was just a child, but it made me hate arguments and fear marriage."*

One of respondent witnessing the domestic violence in his home and said, *"My father slapped my mother and said he is going to divorce her."* They said instead of love and understanding, which is the main goal of a family, they learned to associate family life with arguments and fear.

Parental Neglect and Psychological and Emotional Distress

The respondents of the study reported the absence of care, emotional distance, and no validation from their parents. They expressed that the parents met their material needs, but they neglected their emotional well-being. As one of the respondents said, *"They met our material needs but never focused on emotional well-being."*

Similarly, another participant said, *"Nobody comes to me and asks what I want... half of my worries would end if they did."* They reported the lack of attention and empathy, like one respondent said, "No one in my house asks how I feel. All are full of trying to blame one another.

This ignorance caused the respondents to feel invisible and emotionally alone which caused them to feel empty and unconnected to the family since one respondent stated that, my parents always gave preference to the opinions of others than my own.

The respondents indicated that they have been greatly impacted mentally growing up in families where conflicts are the order of the day. Such experiences as shouting, arguing and tension at home helped them to form anxiety, fear and panic reactions in their daily life. *“My body will shake, and I cannot breathe properly whenever someone shouts or argues at home, just as one of the respondents said. I just cry without any reason.”* This is a demonstration of panic attacks and emotional burden, which are activated by the slightest disturbances. In the same way, one of the respondents said, *I am very scared when there is a fight, I cry a lot. My head continues to reason how it will come to and when there will be peace.* It demonstrates helplessness, fear and anxiety in fights.

Other respondents have also disclosed that these fights did not only have impact on their psychological condition but also their physical one as one respondent stated that, whenever he/she tries to contain and avoid crying, he/she experiences a terrible headache or migraines. *“Tremulous are my hands and legs, and shaky my voice is.”* According to another respondent, *I said, I wake up crying at night with no explanation.* These results indicate that the respondents are yet to get over their past experiences. The big reasons of their mental and physical ill are the traumas, and the problems that they experienced in their past, and they continue to struggle with.

Fear and Insecurity at Home

The respondents complained of a constant sense of fear and insecurity at their residential places. They explained that their houses are not their comfort zones, but the places they live in are filled with fears, tensions, unpredictability and violence. Most of the respondents disclosed that whatever the moment their fathers entered their home, the mood was immediately going to shift making home a silent and anxious place. One of the respondents commented, *“when father is at home, tension begins. My heart feels burdened.”* This indicates the fear and emotional tension that is deep-rooted and the result of unpredictability and potential aggressive behavior.

The other respondent stated that *I always feared that one wrong move might trigger another confrontation.* Such experiences reveal the way these adults have to live in constant emotional vigilance, suppressing their emotions to prevent any conflicts. One of the respondents added, *as a child, I always used to continue thinking that my family was to be broken due to the quarrels of my parents. This demonstrates how when being exposed at a tender age to fights between parents, you become emotionally unstable, and insecure.*

The case is more terrible in the case of the respondents with references to the threats to their bodily security and first-hand violence. One of the respondents said, *“My father does not trust anybody, particularly my mother. After that he said, I shall kill you with a hatchet or I shall strangle you with a pillow.”* This quote reveals that adults were too much afraid and traumatized when violence entered their lives. One more participant was able to mention that he witnessed 5 to 6 large fights with his own eyes. *My father hits my mother and even me when he is angry. The entire household is filled with terror.*

Adulthood in such an environment is a great deterioration of their feeling of being safe and belonging. Constant aggression and fear results in chronic anxiety, fear of authorities and lack of trust in other people. The respondents were also taught to correlate their homes with tension and fear than love and protection.

Repressed Expression and Emotional Questioning

The respondents disclosed that the home where they had to live in was full of conflicts, something that had taught them to be quiet and keep their emotions out of it. They were raised with the understanding that emotions might result in more conflict, criticism or violence. A significant number of respondents said that they were not allowed to talk freely and particularly before their fathers. One of the respondents answered, *we were not allowed to speak in front of father. This demonstrates the fear and control in the family that makes the voices of the individuals silent.* The parents and the children are very weakly bonded, particularly the attachment and the comprehension of the adults to their fathers. These homes have very strict fathers and male dominant culture in such homes where all the members of the homes are feared and pressured by a male member.

The other respondent responded *that she could not express her feelings, her voice trembled and people believed that she was rude.* These are some of the experiences that show how this prolonged emotional repression impacted their self-esteem and communication even in other places. To most of the respondents, silence was a kind of self-protection, which is an acquired way of escaping tension or punishment. One of the participants said, *“I remained quiet, the family honor was more important to my feelings than myself.* This quote demonstrates the role of social norms and family respect in making them not talk about their feelings openly, particularly in the traditional and patriarchal family environment.

The respondents also gave information on how this suppression was a family practice. As one of the respondents stated, *“We, all the siblings have got accustomed to suppressing our emotions.”* It demonstrates that emotional detachment was made the norm and it established the setting where real connection and compassion were not present. One more respondent responded that, *I no longer need to explain. Nobody hears anybody and in case I attempt, it only results in further shouting. I keep secret, even when I am injured.* This always led to emotional numbness, inability to trust people, and internalized distress, such as one participant remarked, *my emotions are trapped inside me. I have lost the ability of expressing myself without having a fear of how somebody is going to react.*

Cultural Silence, Social Isolation, and Pressure of Family Honor

According to the respondent, their families and communities highly disapprove of talking about domestic issues when they are not at home. The culture of silence was also firmly established on the principles of the fact that family honor and reputation were most important than their feelings and emotions. One of the participants stated, *in our home, we were taught that family problems are like clothes, you can never pick them up.* This metaphor is one of the strongest examples of how families conceal their issues to ensure they are regarded as respectable in public solely to conceal the truth and suffering in the behind.

Another respondent replied, *it will be taken as entertainment and so I remained silent. This demonstrates that fear of being gossiped and judged prevents people to seek help or share their troubles.* Isolation and helplessness are caused by the shame related to the disclosing of family conflict. Likewise, one of the participants said, *Mother always says, Don't tell outside people.* It demonstrates how the older generations strengthen force as one of the tools of supporting family image.

Also, the respondents emphasized that such silence is not within individual spheres but culturally supported. One respondent said, *we live in a society where issues are concealed in order to*

maintain honor. This depicts the groupthink in which the need to protect the family image or psychological health comes at a price to emotional clarity or psychological health. Such standards compel people, particularly women and children, to live with pain and endure abusive or unhealthy environments to preserve social respect.

According to the respondent, *they began to avoid people due to the regular tensions and the emotional sufferings that they experienced at home. They feared to be judged or misconstrued.* They also believe that it is better to remain alone as compared to confronting others. This withdrawal of emotions was their means of self-protection against a further hurt. One of the participants stated that once my story was published, *everyone laughed at me. I stopped going out.* This demonstrates the ability of embarrassment and the fear of being judged to isolate an individual. Another respondent also said that, *I cannot eat in front of people; when visitors come, I have no appetite.* It demonstrates the impact of anxiety on even the most basic daily activity. In the same vein, I am nervous and simply want to get home, even amongst other people. It demonstrates how uncomfortable and lonely they feel even when they are among other people.

Ability to Withstand Emotionally and Tolerance Silently

All the respondents expressed the way they silently bear the burden and attempt to keep things moving despite all the encounters. Being in a family where they have no peace taught the respondents that the only way to survive is to remain quiet and withstand and endure this suffering is the only way to be powerful. Most of the respondents explained how they live on concealing their misery, acting as though nothing is wrong, yet their heart may be shattered.

One respondent complained that *nobody knows about what I go through. I have also learned to weep in silence and move on since no-one will know.* This demonstrates how the communication gap between the members of the home alienates them to each other. Another one said, *the only thing I do is to sit there some days and cry. That is how I manage to survive, faking it is all normal.* Other respondents on the same note explained *how this perseverance has become integrated in them.*

This form of silent suffering indicates a way of how individuals adapt to a stressful situation in which open communication is not embraced or restricted. In most families particularly in traditional or patriarchal families, adults are supposed to remain strong and conceal their weakness. Due to these social expectations, the participants conceal their feelings and keep their suffering in their hearts.

Social Stigma and the Fear of Being Judged

Most of the respondents claimed that they remained silent regarding their family feuds since they feared being criticized by others or labeled negatively by others. In their perspective, they are inclined to think that our society does not encourage individuals to talk to others about their personal or family issues. Disclosing family matters is perceived as being a weak or disrespectful person to the family. Due to such fear, each of the adults bearing this pain conceals it and pretends that nothing is wrong.

One of the respondents said, people would think you are weak when you talk about family problems and the other one said, *I cannot talk to anyone as they will say that you are ungrateful, in our society it is better to keep the problems outside because people would not help you rather they would make you feel guilty* and so one respondent said, *the others would say that you are broken, so keep it to yourself because it is not worth making things better.*

This demonstrates that social stigmatization and fear of judgment have a powerful effect on the way in which adults cope with their feelings and hardships. They tend to suppress their emotions in order to save the image of their families rather than to seek help in order to keep their respect in society. This silence in fact adds to their stress and shuns them off potential support.

Avoidance, Adaptability, and Coping Abilities

The participants reported how they turned their painful experiences into lessons for personal growth. Despite facing so many fights and stress at their homes, they learned how to handle emotions with maturity and patience. They got to comprehend the meaning of peace, communication, and empathy. To certain respondents, such struggles may turn out to be a learning process and they learn not to repeat what they witnessed at their homes.

One of the interviewees has explained that he/she has learned through the errors of his/her parents. *I will never bring my children up as angry or fearful people. One of the respondents answered, Pain made me a stronger person; now I realize the price of peace.* Self-awareness is also an aspect through which another respondent developed, *“I have learned that shouting never resolves anything. Patience and listening do.”* The other respondent claimed that one could not alter their past but could prevent it to happen in their future. This is a demonstration of the flexibility of human beings, how one can create meaning even on misery. They do not only develop personally, but socially, and hope to create families with an understanding, communication, and emotional safety, which was lacking in the case of IN.

The respondents applied various strategies to get out of their emotional suffering and stressful setting. The adults would distract many of them rather than confronting them with their emotions or dealing with them. Work, sleep, and social media were the solutions that they resorted to forget their worries in the short run. The distractions turn into the means of survival among them, which is what helps them to remain calm and prevent the further conflicts within the home. The quietness, the bustle or even the solitude provided them with the slight feeling of control in a life which was often painful.

The participant explained that, *since I keep myself busy, I do not need to think. The other respondent replied, scrolling my phone is what helps me to forget in the meantime.* Other respondents cited the way avoidance would enable them to cope such as one respondent responded, *sometimes I just sleep all day to avoid fights.* According to one respondent, he locks himself in his room when things get heavy. It is a lot simpler to weep and not to tell. One of the respondents said that she takes dramas all night and therefore her mind does not revisit those memories.

Such a coping style reveals the fact that people in homes where the conflicts are always present develop avoidant coping styles to defend themselves emotionally. Distraction is a nonverbal self-protection mechanism in societies where open communication is discouraged or where family disputes are perceived to be unending. Although these approaches do not address the issues at the root level, they help involved parties to live in emotionally unsafe conditions with the help of providing them with little pieces of relief.

The Responsibility of the Elders as Emotional Managers

Most of the respondents, and particularly the older ones, were compelled to remain strong and care about other people, leaving their own emotions aside. There is a tendency of them to become the emotional managers in their families, who always aspire to ensure everyone is calm whenever there is a conflict. One of the participants said, *I am always the one who tries to stop the fights to make everybody cool down. No one ever inquires about how I feel. It is as though my feelings were*

of no consequence. The other respondent stated, *you have to appear strong even when you are falling apart on the inside.* To other respondents, this weight was like having to parent their parents; *I have been a parent to my parents. I make the house a peaceful place, as somebody has to.* Other people express emotional fatigue and complain, everybody wants me to work out the problems, yet nobody realizes that I am also exhausted. They attempted to remain calm, even though they felt overwhelmed, because, according to one of the participants, they knew that the moment they lost control, everything would spiral out of control, so they simply had to hold on. This reveals how such family problems and conflicts may propel people, and especially the elderly, to become caretakers, which leaves very little room in terms of their emotional healing. They have to comprehend the meaning of peace, communication, and empathy. To certain respondents, such struggles may turn out to be a learning process and they learn not to repeat what they witnessed at their homes.

Discussion

The findings of this research clearly indicate that adults grown up in homes filled with conflicts and tensions, struggling with deep psychosocial problems, remain silent. These themes show that the early experience of neglect and violence led to emotional instability in the participants, which led to stress, anxiety, fear, and trust issues. These findings are also related to the previous literature. Rahman, Iqbal, & Malik (2021) explained that conflict and weak family relationships increase stress and reduce psychological security, which matches the experiences shared by the participants.

The researchers of the previous researcher also declared that the consequences of these conflicts and the stressful environment continue to the whole life, which also affects their social functioning (Sharma et al., 2025; Maharjan, 2025). The findings of this research are also matched with the previous findings, like the participants of this study reported experiencing shivering, migraine, crying, and panic attacks during the situation of conflict.

The findings show that the majority of the participants face difficulty in expressing their emotions. They are struggling with issues like emotional numbness, self-doubt, and self-esteem. Most of the participants said that they don't get a chance to be listened to, and no ones understand their feelings and emotions in their childhood, that's why the suppressed emotions get collected in their own. Literature also declared that individuals growing up in conflict-ridden families mostly face emotional dysregulation. A recent reference like Ahmed & Fatima (2022) also supported that the conflicts damage the lives and lead to hidden social and psychological struggles.

According to the research, children in houses that are filled with frequent fights and arguments are not able to develop social skills, norms, and values. Participants were told that their parents had failed to give them proper guidance because of the conflicts. Most of the participants don't get a chance to learn communication skills, gender roles, and conflict resolution. This is also matched with the Parson's family theory, where the family is known to be a primary socializing agent. Qureshi and Sheikh (2020) also found that the families which are not function properly in south Asia context mostly fail to give support and guidance, which affects the development of the children.

Societal stigma plays an important role in silencing the emotional struggles of individuals. The adults from conflict-ridden homes reported that they remained silent because society perceives them as bad who expose the family issues in front of others. They were afraid of gossip, judgment, or being labeled as "ungrateful" for exposing their family issues. Social norms and behavior dictate emotional expression according to Giddens (2006). In our culture, which is patriarchal,

where honor is regarded as more significant and valuable than our well-being, being able to share our struggles with others was another stress that took place on them. This stigma prevented them to seek help of other people and that is why their emotional issues become even deeper.

Long-term consequences included low self-esteem, chronic anxiety, and social withdrawal. The adults face difficulty in making healthy relationships. Some adults reported that they have the ability to transfer painful experiences into personal growth. These adults express a big wish to have a peaceful and healthy family in the future, and they want to break this harmful cycle. Ahmed and Fatima (2022) highlight that the resilience of emotions among adults leads to conflicts.

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to understand how growing up in homes filled with fights and tensions shapes our personality and life. The adults who live in this toxic environment are struggling with their emotions and social relationships. So, it can be concluded that young adults have difficulty in understanding, expressing, and controlling their emotions. Most of the people still feel panic, anxiety, and inner frustration. The tensions in their families lead to a lack of self-confidence, trust, and difficulty in making relationships with others. These findings declared that if we don't pay full attention to our basic responsibility and fail to give proper attention, love, guidance, and peace to the children, it leads to difficulty in their social learning.

This research also showed that adults who live in conflict-ridden houses are always victims of confusion. They always face confusion when they must decide others' lives. They find it difficult to handle their emotions and stress. The respondents reveal that the frequent fights in their homes affect their academic life badly. Lack of focus, overthinking, and self-doubt affect their performance. Mostly adults hesitate to get the leadership roles and are scared to show their emotions because they are taught to adjust and silence in their childhood. This study clarified that the family is not only a place to live, but it is also a primary institution that develops the personality of individuals, their behavior, and shapes their social skills. When the role of family remains negative, it not only affects a person, but it also travels from generation to generation. Therefore, it is important to promote open communication and not ignore their emotional needs. If society and family come together and support the individuals, then they can easily handle their emotions and personal matters. Programs designed for families to train them about controlling anger, good communication, and conflict resolution can make the family environment more stable and supportive.

Conflict of Interest

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