

# WOMEN'S PROTECTION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF "THE MAN OF POWER" WITHIN JOINT AND NUCLEAR FAMILY SYSTEMS: A Study in Indonesia and Pakistan

**Ernita Dewi**

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh  
Jl. Syech Abdurrauf, Banda Aceh, Aceh 23111, Indonesia  
e-mail: ernita.dewi@ar-raniry.ac.id

**Muhammad Furqan**

Universitas Samudra  
Jl. Prof. Dr. Syarief Thayeb, Langsa, Aceh 24416, Indonesia  
e-mail: muhammadfurqan@unsam.ac.id

**Wan Fariza Alyati Wan Zakaria**

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
Lingkungan Ilmu, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia  
e-mail: aufaa@ukm.edu.my

**Zohaib Hasan Sain**

Superior University  
17 KM, Main Raiwind Road, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan  
e-mail: zohaib3746@gmail.com

**Muzakkir**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara  
Jl. Willem Iskandar Pasar V Medan Estate, Sumatera Utara 20371, Indonesia  
e-mail: muzakkir@uinsu.ac.id

**Abstract:** Pakistani society generally interprets Islamic teachings textually, especially regarding men's responsibility to protect women, resulting in a strong patriarchal structure. The joint family system places the eldest male as the protector for all members, giving women security in basic needs and housing. This differs from Indonesia, where Muslim communities tend to provide women with greater equality and autonomy. Using a qualitative descriptive method through field and literature research, this study finds that women in Pakistan's joint family system receive broader support when husbands are absent or irresponsible. In contrast, women in nuclear families—common in Indonesia—often face greater vulnerability due to limited family assistance. While the joint family system enhances women's protection, it also reinforces dependence on male authority.

**Keywords:** Women's protection, joint family, nuclear family, gender roles, family structure.

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## Introduction

The discourse on the role of men in Pakistani culture is deeply rooted in long-standing patriarchal traditions, where gender hierarchies are firmly entrenched in both domestic and public spheres. In Pakistani society, men are socially positioned as superior to women, a status reflected in their dominant presence in decision-making, economic provision, and household leadership.<sup>1</sup> Masculinity is closely associated with authority, protection, and control—attributes that are expected to manifest in men's behavior and responsibilities. As such, men are seen not only as providers but as the primary protectors of the family, especially for women and children, who are perceived as dependents in need of male guardianship.<sup>2</sup>

In stark contrast, the Indonesian cultural context presents a more fluid and egalitarian approach to gender roles within the family. Although patriarchal influences remain present, Indonesian families often exhibit a more balanced distribution of responsibilities between men and women.<sup>3</sup> In many cases, women assume central roles in managing the household economy, child-rearing, and even decision-making. This shift has been partly shaped by the influence of modernity, education, and economic transitions, particularly in urban areas. Consequently, the structure and function of families in Indonesia are increasingly characterized by autonomy, nuclear living arrangements, and individualized responsibilities.<sup>4</sup>

These cultural divergences significantly influence the prevailing family systems in both countries. In Pakistan, the joint family system—where multiple generations live together under one roof—remains the normative family model. This structure emphasizes kinship solidarity, shared resources, and collective responsibility, particularly among male members.<sup>5</sup> Financial obligations are distributed such that one earning member may support not only his wife and children but also his parents, siblings, and their dependents. This arrangement serves as a social safety net, particularly for women who, under this system, are ensured housing, sustenance, and emotional support, even in circumstances such as widowhood or unemployment.<sup>6</sup>

The joint family system also embodies a deeply rooted ethos of familial interdependence. For example, when a brother loses his job, another brother or the father steps in to provide financial assistance.<sup>7</sup> Women, while generally confined to domestic roles, benefit from the continuity of support and the assurance that their basic needs will be met through the family's collective efforts.<sup>8</sup> However, this protective ethos is simultaneously shaped by theological interpretations of male leadership in Islam. Pakistani society strictly follows Islamic law, particularly the notion of men (*qawwâmun*) as leaders and protectors of women (Qur'an 4:34). In this framework, women are considered dependents who must be safeguarded, while men carry the burden of provision and authority. This theological underpinning echoes Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of the *Man of Power*, in which men are envisioned as vicegerents (*khalifah*) entrusted with responsibility, creativity, and protection.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the nuclear family system is the predominant household arrangement, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. A nuclear family typically consists

of a husband, wife, and their children, living separately from extended kin.<sup>9</sup> The separation from extended family reduces potential conflict with in-laws and allows for greater privacy and control over domestic affairs. In this system, women are more likely to make independent decisions about finances, child-rearing, and lifestyle, reflecting a modern outlook on family roles.<sup>10</sup>

However, the nuclear family system also has its limitations. The absence of extended family support can create significant vulnerabilities, particularly when the male provider is absent due to death, divorce, or economic hardship. Women in such situations may struggle to meet basic needs, raising concerns about food security, housing stability, and emotional isolation. Single mothers or unemployed wives are often left to navigate these challenges alone, with limited assistance from extended kin or community networks.<sup>11</sup>

Despite a growing body of scholarship on patriarchy and Muslim family systems, few studies have conducted a systematic comparison between the joint family system of Pakistan and the nuclear family system of Indonesia in relation to women's security, autonomy, and well-being.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the existing literature often overlooks the relevance of Islamic theological concepts—such as Iqbal's *Man of Power*—in framing men's authority and responsibility within family structures. Islamic teachings do not pressure the system in family, whether it is a joint family or a nuclear family. However, Islam is very concerned about the protection of women for all kinds of oppression, injustice, or even discrimination.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at exploring in depth the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding women's protection within two different family systems: the joint family system in Pakistan and the nuclear family system in Indonesia. The qualitative method is considered appropriate for capturing complex social realities and the lived experiences of women embedded in these contrasting familial structures. By emphasizing context and meaning, this approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the gendered roles, cultural expectations, and familial support systems that shape women's wellbeing.

The research was conducted in two distinct geographical and cultural settings. The first location is Aceh Province, Indonesia, which generally represents the practice of the nuclear family system. This research was also conducted in two provinces of Pakistan: Punjab (in the districts of Multan and Sheikhpura) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (in the districts of Swat and Mardan). The characteristics of these two provinces are very different. While both adhere to the joint family system, the people of Punjab are more flexible in practicing traditions, whereas those in KPK are more conservative and religious, with stricter implementation of Islamic teachings. In Khyber Pathunkwa (KPK), for example, women are required to wear the burqa and are not allowed to speak with men outside of their family, while in Punjab women typically dress modestly using a dupatta and enjoy relatively more social flexibility.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and richness of information. The study subjects included Indonesian women living in nuclear families, Indonesian women married to Pakistani men and residing in joint families, male heads of households, and respected family elders or cultural informants in both regions. The respondents included both Pakistani and Indonesian citizens. For Pakistani participants, the majority were men due to the difficulty of directly accessing female respondents, while the Indonesian respondents were women married to Pakistani men, residing either in Pakistan or between Indonesia and Pakistan. Respondents came from both rural and urban areas, with socio-economic backgrounds ranging from lower-middle to upper-middle classes. All respondents were Muslim, with at least a bachelor's degree education level. Importantly, the choice of living in joint families was not merely an economic decision, but also motivated by cultural traditions and a strong desire for collective living.

Data collection techniques comprised in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with women to explore their personal experiences and perceptions regarding familial support and protection, while male participants provided insights into their cultural perspectives on women's roles and protection. Observational data were obtained through immersion in the participants' domestic settings to capture everyday interactions and role distributions. Additionally, relevant documents and literature were reviewed to enrich and validate the empirical findings. Respondents who have been reasearch on man who play the role of family leader are responsiblefor their mothers, wife, and sisters who are under 30 years old. The data analysis process followed a thematic qualitative analysis approach consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Codes and themes were generated both inductively from the field data and deductively based on the guiding theoretical lens. The coding was conducted manually, with the researchers developing a set of thematic categories to capture emerging patterns regarding women's social security, economic dependency, emotional well-being, and domestic dynamics. To ensure validity, methodological triangulation was employed—cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and documents. Each technique contributed uniquely: interviews provided subjective experiences, observations revealed behavioral and relational dynamics, and documents contextualized findings historically and culturally.

Importantly, the analysis was also guided by the philosophical framework of Muhammad Iqbal's concept of the "Man of Power" (*mard-e-momin*), which views men as divinely entrusted protectors and leaders within the family and society. This framework was used to interpret how cultural and religious narratives around masculinity and authority shape the lived experiences of women in joint and nuclear families. By embedding the findings within this philosophical perspective, the study highlights the tension between protection and autonomy in women's roles across the two systems.



## Results and Discussion

### Pakistan and the Joint Family Tradition

The cultural life in Pakistan is deeply centered around male members of society, with men occupying key positions within the social structure. The family is typically headed by a male figure, usually the oldest male member, who is responsible for guiding other family members and, in most cases, serves as the primary breadwinner.<sup>13</sup> The joint family system remains widely practiced in Pakistan, where the economic burden is shared among all earning members, thereby reducing financial stress across the household.<sup>14</sup>

Two main family systems are commonly observed in Pakistan: the joint family system and the nuclear family system. A nuclear family consists of a married couple living with their children in a separate household. In contrast, a joint family includes multiple generations living together under one roof, often comprising parents, children, and grandparents. The joint family structure reflects a traditional social setup characterized by collective living and mutual dependence. As defined by Kapadia (1996), a joint family is one in which members live together, share meals, and engage in communal worship.<sup>15</sup>

Men strongly believe that a man's duty is protect women. This is an important teaching in islam. If it is not done, it will be sin, as well as their understanding of theology. Women living together in the same house is a form of real protection and this is conciderd as something that must be done. Living together with the family will be far from various things that cause social problems, so Pakistani women living at home can be filled various activities such as reciting and *dzikr* whose purpose is to get closer to Allah.

In joint family one members goes out job then order family member help and provide financial assitanance. It is important that each members in a joint family, must feel that he has a worth in the family although might be having some weaknesses and limitation.<sup>16</sup> In joint family system a working lady find it difficult to meet household responsibilities along with retaining a job. She feels futher discouragement if she has to spend her income on her in laws. The parents of husband expect more contribution in family expense as they think both husband and wife are earning.<sup>17</sup>

The father's position is very important in the joint family system because the father will be the leader of the family and his voice will be heard by all family members. Yuli said that when Yuli was brought from Indonesia to Pakistan to settle with other families in the joint family system, Yuli was treated very well by her father-in-law. He would buy all the household necessities they needed, and was always at the forefront of solving problems that occurred between family members.<sup>18</sup>

The atmosphere of the joint family is very different when the father has passed away, if the role of the father's replacement such as the eldest brother is not strong, it will be difficult to make the joint family members get along. This was experienced by the

Qais family, when their father was still alive they all got along in the joint family, living in one house with 3 biological brothers along with their wives and children. But after their father died, one by one, the Qais' siblings chose to rent a house and live with their wives and children in separate houses. The situation made Qais' mother sad and only Qais stayed to look after their mother and his wife.<sup>19</sup>

Santi, an Indonesian woman married to a Pakistani man, said that before marriage her husband had told her that Santi would live in Pakistan, with the wife of the husband's brother in one house, and that Santi would be in charge of caring for her elderly mother. Although after living a joint family life in Pakistan Santi experienced more or less a culture shock, the marriage had taken place, and Santi had to accept living together with her husband's family in one house.<sup>20</sup> In a joint family, household chores are shared, but the son-in-law of the smallest child usually gets more tasks. The son-in-law of the smallest son has to serve his mother-in-law as well as his sister-in-law, as a form of respect for his elders. As the smallest son and my wife as the smallest sister-in-law, I have to serve my mother and my sister-in-law. They don't do anything, all the work is done by my wife. However, it has become a tradition in my area that the son-in-law of the smallest child must provide services to his elders.<sup>21</sup> In Lahore, Pakistan, it has been a family tradition for my husband to live in the same house with his sister. My husband's brother and his wife live in the same house with different rooms. We have an unmarried younger sister who lives with us. For daily shopping needs, my brother or my husband will buy for us, or work together to fulfill our daily needs. My brother is the leader in the house we live in.<sup>22</sup>

Pakistani society remains deeply embedded in the joint family tradition, where men occupy central roles as providers, leaders, and protectors. The family structure is typically patriarchal, with the eldest male acting as head of household and primary decision-maker. This system is rooted in both cultural practice and theological interpretation of the Qur'anic verse *al-rijâl qawwâmûna 'alâ al-nisâ'* (Q.S. al-Nisâ': 34), which positions men as protectors and maintainers of women. Muhammad Iqbal's concept of the *Man of Power* further reinforces this understanding: men are entrusted with responsibility, creativity, and moral leadership, thereby legitimizing their dominance in both familial and social life. Within this framework, women are primarily positioned as dependents whose safety and welfare are ensured through collective living. The joint family system not only guarantees economic stability by pooling resources but also provides social security for widows and children in the absence of a father. However, this arrangement simultaneously restricts women's mobility, limits their access to education and employment, and subjects them to constant supervision, particularly in conservative Pashtun communities.

## **Nuclear Family in Indonesia**

Nuclear family or in Indonesian means "*keluarga inti*" consists of father, mother and children.<sup>23</sup> In general, the family system in Indonesia adheres to the nuclear family

system, which consists of a nuclear family in a house. The majority of Indonesians practice the nuclear family system, and rarely live in extended families. Even in rural areas, many married couples choose to live in a house with only their nuclear family. In the past, many families chose to live together in the same house with other families, but several family studies concluded that the change in the family system was due to the influence of modernization. Industrial activities encourage people to work in the industrial sector, which encourages people to work and leave their homes, and form families separate from their extended families.<sup>24</sup>

This research will sample the Aceh region of Indonesia, which is generally representative of other regions in Indonesia. Husbands and wives in the nuclear family system feel more freedom when they build a household just for them and their children. After the wedding they will rent a house to live in temporarily, but if there are no other relatives in the parents' house then they choose to live there, until they can afford to buy or build their own house.<sup>25</sup> In the nuclear family system, the role of parents is very important, especially for their children. The position of the woman or mother in the nuclear family is the nurturer of the child who provides a sense of comfort to the child, the mother is a symbol of peace and tenderness.<sup>26</sup> A woman in a nuclear family will be responsible for her family. In this system, women have great authority to manage the household and make the right policies to decide on problems that occur in the household.<sup>27</sup>

Theologically, this model resonates with contextualist interpretations of Islam that emphasize partnership (*zawjiyyah*) between men and women, rather than absolute male dominance. While nuclear families grant women greater independence, they also expose vulnerabilities. In cases of widowhood or divorce, women may lack economic security and familial support, as extended kin are less involved in providing long-term assistance. Thus, the Indonesian case reflects a model of resilience through independence, in contrast to Pakistan's reliance on collective dependence.

## Male Position in Joint and Nuclear Family

The cultural life in Pakistan revolves around male members of society, who hold central roles in both the social and familial structures. The family is typically led by a male figure, usually the eldest male member, who serves as the head of the household. He is responsible for guiding other family members and, in most cases, acts as the primary or sole source of income for the entire family.<sup>28</sup> The position of men in Pakistani culture is highly dominant. This elevated status is reflected in the philosophical ideas of Muhammad Iqbal, who describes man as a self-assured organism whose individuality must be developed. This development of individuality is central to his philosophy. According to Iqbal, man must strive to realize his full potential by attaining the status of vicegerency (*khalifah*). A man's power lies in his ability to create, understand, and dominate his environment—skills that must be cultivated to fulfill his divine purpose.

To understand his surroundings, man must adopt an objective approach, and only through mastering the techniques of exploring and utilizing nature can he truly contribute to the betterment of humanity. This process of self-realization and mastery is inherently tied to spirituality: the closer a man is to God—the Perfect Individual—the more complete his individuality becomes. Conversely, the farther he is from God, the less perfect his development will be. Therefore, man must continuously strive to draw nearer to God, and through this spiritual journey, he gains increasing power over his environment.<sup>29</sup>

Iqbal emphasizes that man's creation is not a random occurrence, but a deliberate act of divine will. Man's independence of thought and his responsibility on earth are signs of his noble purpose. Iqbal further asserts that man is intended to be God's representative on earth. This role grants him the authority to manage worldly affairs through the use of his creative faculties. Man is, therefore, not merely a creature of instinct but a co-creator. God refers to Himself as "the Best of Creators," acknowledging man's creative role. For Iqbal, man is not a passive observer nor a slave to a static environment; he is a dignified and exceptional creation—far beyond what biological science alone can define.

Men are leaders, for a boy in Pakistan he is born a hero and is responsible for taking care of his family. In Pakistan the birth of a boy is more welcomed than a girl, because a boy will be the protector of the family, while a girl cannot be a protector and even she must be protected. Girls are raised to be mothers and wives who take care of the household needs. A wife will have more confidence and power in the family if she has given birth to a son.<sup>30</sup> In Pakistan if a man works and earns money then he will give his earnings to the family. If on another occasion the man loses his job, another relative will help to provide all the necessities he needs. It is not uncommon for a family member to migrate abroad and earn a lot of money, which they send back to their village for the family to enjoy together.<sup>31</sup> Theological perspective of Pakistan society does not give women wide access to work, public and financial responsibilities are the responsibility of men, while women are only given domestic burdens. Men have the physical strength to carry out their duties as family leaders. Joint family is not just a tradition that has been carried out for centuries, but joint family is considered as a form of interpretation of the understanding of Islamic law. As Islam gives men the responsibility to provide for their wives and families. So this obligation is carried out, women have no obligation to earn money and buy all household needs.<sup>32</sup>

My family does not allow women to work and I will not accept money from women. A woman's job at home is to look after the children and prepare all the household needs as her main duty. All my brothers work, while their wives just take care of the household. My older sister got married and was taken to live with her

husband's family. My sister also does not work to earn money, just being a housewife.<sup>33</sup> Emma said that when she lived in a joint family she was tormented, everything she did was considered wrong and they were cynical towards her. Strict rules in the family, where women cannot go out alone even if it is for shopping, cannot talk to other people, especially with other men, and there are many rules that are very different from her life in Indonesia.<sup>34</sup>

The divergent family systems illustrate distinct constructions of masculinity. In Pakistan, men embody the ideal of Iqbal's *Man of Power*, characterized by leadership, responsibility, and authority over women and younger kin. Male dominance is reinforced not only through socio-cultural norms but also through theological justification, where protection and provision are regarded as religious duties. The Pakistani case exemplifies dependency theory, wherein women are structurally reliant on men for financial, social, and physical protection.

### **Vulnerability of Women's Position in Joint and Nuclear Family**

Women in the nuclear family system are more independent because they have to carry out many things themselves, both public and domestic activities. Women in the nuclear family system only live with their husbands and children, if the husband is not around then household tasks will be done alone. In the event of death or divorce, women have to work alone to earn money, with no one to provide assistance, even from their own family. So many women in the nuclear family system become single parents when there is no husband, even when the husband is present but does not work, then the woman as a wife will work to meet the needs of the household.<sup>35</sup> In the joint family system, if the husband dies, the husband's family, including the father-in-law and brothers of the husband, will give money to their widowed sister-in-law. In this case, women are more economically vulnerable in the nuclear family system than in joint family life.<sup>36</sup> Many men in nuclear families do not have the power of man to look after and protect their wives. Therefore, in the nuclear family system, women must get a high and proper education and must get good skills, in order to get a job. This is necessary so that women can survive along with the children under their care (Author's Observation and Experience).<sup>37</sup>

The joint family system in Pakistan provides strong economic security but at the cost of female autonomy, often resulting in mental strain and reduced life satisfaction among women. Conversely, the nuclear family in Indonesia grants women freedom to participate in public life but leaves them vulnerable when male protection is absent. Both systems reveal tensions between dependency and autonomy, protection and vulnerability. Islamic theology, particularly within Sufi traditions, emphasizes balance: men are tasked with leadership not to dominate, but to cultivate justice, compassion, and partnership. Thus, Iqbal's *Man of Power* should not be read merely

as a justification for patriarchy, but as a call for men to embody spiritual strength and moral responsibility. A comparative analysis of Pakistan and Indonesia demonstrates how cultural contexts shape gender relations, highlighting the need for a reinterpretation of Islamic teachings that supports both family protection and female autonomy.

## **The Power of the Mother's Position in Joint and Nuclear Families**

The mother is the queen in the joint family system in Pakistan. All decisions regarding sons, daughters and daughters-in-law depend on the mother. A boy in Pakistan is very obedient to his mother, even for marriage they will leave it to the mother to choose the wife they will marry. Even if a man has a woman he loves, if his mother does not approve they cannot get married. Marriage is only possible if the mother gives her blessing and it is common for mothers to choose wives for their sons from their own relatives. Failure to do so would make the mother angry and a boy in Pakistan does not want his mother to be angry and sad, they are afraid of being disobedient. Islam commands people to obey their mothers, if we disobey, we will sin. If we go against our mothers then one day karma will apply to us, where our children will also not obey their parents, and will even be disobedient. So I accepted everything my mother told me to do. I married my cousin, the son of my maternal aunt, I had no love for my cousin, but my mother wanted me to marry my cousin, if I did not marry my cousin then my mother would die and would not give me the chance to live in my house anymore. I love another woman but I must obey my mother and not marry another woman. I want my mother to be happy even if I don't get my love. I must follow my mother's orders, no matter if it makes me happy or not.<sup>38</sup>

The majority of marriages in Pakistan are arranged by parents, but some are given the freedom of choice for more open and modern families. Most still adhere to the arranged marriage system, especially those who live in rural areas, but there are also many in the cities, especially rich and educated parents who will choose a wife from the same circle. Harris, a hotel owner in Pakistan, says that he already has a future wife from his cousin who was chosen by his mother.<sup>39</sup> The husband's parents often place financial pressure on the couple, under the assumption that since both partners are working, they should be able to bear the household expenses. As a result, instead of being able to save a benefit typically associated with collective living—a working woman may find herself financially drained, unable to retain any income for her personal needs or future security.<sup>40</sup>

As a result, the parent-child relationship and the emotional rights of kinship are often compromised, lost in the demands of work, miscommunication, and rigid family expectations. In such circumstances, working mothers may feel they have little say in decisions regarding their children. Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, the joint family system still offers valuable support for working women in an increasingly insecure world.<sup>41</sup>

In Pakistan no child would put his mother or father in a nursing home or day care center. Because boys in Pakistan are very responsible to their mothers. They follow the teachings of Islam which require filial piety. Mothers in Pakistan are well-protected in their old age and are respected by their children. Mothers are the queens of the household whose opinions are followed by their children. In Pakistan there is a tradition of sons marrying a woman from their own cousin, with the intention that the wife will take care of their mother. It is a must to marry a woman from the mother's or father's family, so that they can be sure that they will take care of their mother or father when they grow old. If you want to remarry another woman from outside the country, there is no problem as Pakistani society allows polygamy, but one Pakistani wife must stay at home and take care of their mother.<sup>42</sup>

In a nuclear family, the mother will live alone in her home when she gets old. Children will have their own homes and families, they only come on certain days, sometimes even once a year during the holidays. Mothers will not feel comfortable living with their children, if they have their own homes, feeling more comfortable in their own homes than being next to their children or in-laws. The mother in a nuclear family is not the queen, because eventually the mother will live alone with all her feelings of loneliness. There are also many children who do not want to take care of their parents and are entrusted to nursing homes.

### **Joint Family and Strengthening Family Protection from Homelessness**

Joint family practiced in Pakistan, especially in the KPK province, is to make separate rooms for one family from another. The rooms have all the necessary equipment, kitchen and well as beds. But for parents who have money and buy a large area of land, sons who have money can build their own house, but it is still in a complex with the houses of their parents and other brothers. Yuli, one of the mixed marriages who lives with his in-laws, said that in the joint family system all children get a house, at least one room. So there are no children who have no place to live or are homeless. There is a house or room for shelter, in matters of food we share with each other, if my father buys fish, meat we cook and eat together. So everyone who has food will share. When my husband has no money, his brother or father will give him money. Here we don't feel deprived. We are also free to go into my sister-in-law's room and eat cake or food there. There is no such thing as privacy in my food, everything here belongs together. So far I've enjoyed it and am happy to be able to share. There is no such thing as me being hungry while my brother is full.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to the nuclear family system, the joint family offers a more secure safety net, as described by Yuli, who noted that in her husband's family, the welfare of children is guaranteed even after the father's death, and widows continue to receive housing and food support (Yuli – Indonesian-Pakistani Mixed Marriage Wife, 12 January 2025). Haider Shah, a man from Swat, Pakistan, stated that he works in Dubai to support his extended

family, including the wife and children of his late older brother. At the age of 35, Haider has not yet married because he prioritizes the well-being of his family. He does not want his brother's widow to suffer due to a lack of financial support or housing. In his community, it is not uncommon for a younger brother to marry the widow of his deceased brother as a way to ensure her and the orphaned children's protection and security.

In many traditional Pakistani families, particularly where women do not work or earn an income, the death of a husband places women in a vulnerable position. As such, they often rely heavily on their in-laws for financial support and shelter. This cultural practice serves to uphold the collective responsibility of the joint family and underscores the role of male relatives in ensuring the continued welfare of women and children after the loss of a primary provider.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

The comparative findings indicate that both the joint family system in Pakistan and the nuclear family system in Indonesia provide distinct forms of protection and challenges for women. The joint family ensures material security and collective support but often compromises women's psychological well-being and personal autonomy, while the nuclear family promotes independence and decision-making power but leaves women vulnerable to economic insecurity. Viewed through Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of the "Man of Power," these differences reflect contrasting interpretations of male responsibility: in Pakistan, men embody comprehensive guardianship over the extended family as protectors and providers, while in Indonesia, men's role as protectors is more individualized, allowing women greater participation in household and public life. This contrast highlights the tension between external protection and internal autonomy in Muslim-majority contexts.

These insights carry important implications. In Pakistan, empowering women through education and controlled access to the public sphere could complement the protective features of the joint family, while in Indonesia, stronger social safety nets—such as widow support, housing assistance, and childcare—could reduce the vulnerabilities of nuclear households. Reinterpreting the "Man of Power" framework in light of contemporary gender equality debates within Islamic thought may open pathways toward more balanced family models that integrate both protection and empowerment. Future research should further explore how women themselves negotiate and redefine the meaning of protection within changing socio-economic and religious landscapes. Joint family provides more value for women's protection, male power as responsible guardians is very important to be applied in the nuclear family system, which is now vulnerable due to lack of responsibility.



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