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## EXPLORING THE CAUSES OF HONOR-KILLING IN LARKANA

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this paper is explore the major cause of honor-killing in Larkana division. This study will analyze the cultural, economic, social, and religious aspects of the issue to determine the root cause of the problem It will also examine emotional factors for extra marital relationship. The study has used original sources of data including the police station records and the researcher has also conducted interviews to have clear understanding of the issue of honor-killing. The study concludes key points regarding the honour-killing. It also provides recommendation for various stakeholders to make a collective strategy to eliminate the evil of honour-killing.*

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**Keywords:** Honor-killing, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, Feudal system

### INTRODUCTION

Honor Killing is one of the serious social problems faced by Pakistani society in general and Sindh in particular. It has adversely affected the lives of women in terms of their marginalization from the mainstream socio-economic and political life. Mostly, the honor killing is common in the societies based on the old and outdated structures where women have little space and they have not right to participate in the affairs of the society. Woman is treated as inferior by the male-dominated society. Women are not allowed to move and further her activities are curbed by the cultural values.

There can be different perspectives behind the honor killing. Researchers have been attempting from time to time to find out the real causes of this criminal act. Resulting into the death of scores of women based on real or perceived illicit sexual relationship with others.

The definition of ‘crimes of honor’ is by no means straightforward, and the imprecision and ‘eroticization’ (in the West) of its use are among the reasons for caution in use of the phrase. At its most basic, the term is commonly used as violence against women. An example of a crime of honor is the killing of a woman by her father or

brother or any relative for engaging in, or being suspected of engaging in, sexual practices outside marriage. Honor killing has roots in ancient tribal customs and is a centuries old social evil. In pre-Islamic days, newborn girls buried to avoid the possibility that they would dishonor the family when they grow up (Haider, 2004).

Practice of killing of women in the name of honor have been known since ancient Roman times, when the pater families retained the right to kill an unmarried but sexually active daughters or an adulterous wife (Zafar Farhat, et.al., 2020).

In 18<sup>th</sup> century above type of murders were considered legal in the Rome. Christian and Jews began to punish the guilty in disgraceful manner by stoning. Thus, women were killed in Italy for damaging the reputation of families. The Roman law did not put penalties or punishments for murders. Italian society did not consider the offence of honor killing as socially harmful act but as an individual act of violating social norms. Under Roman law committer of crime could be husband, father or sibling and victim could be daughter, sister, or wife (Bettiga, 2005).

It is not known, when the practice ended in Europe. Crimes of passion, which are like honor killing, persist in Europe and western countries. Such acts often have special status under the law. Until 1975, the French penal code committed the sentence of a husband, who found his wife in fragrant delicate and killed her. This law passed into the legal frameworks of the many nations, "Such killings have been reported in Bangladesh, Britain, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Morocco, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda and United Kingdom. It is also reported that among Sikhs in the adjacent India, and Afghanistan the practice is condemned. Under the rule of Taliban, women suffered all types of crime including the murders of women in the name of honour-killing.

In Pakistani Society women account for almost equal to men. Nevertheless, they are deprived of their social economic and political rights. Their participation in national development is ensured in the constitutions but they are denied and thus they do not enjoy equal status in society. They have to obey the command of male members of society and accept the obsolete cultural norms. Women are considered inferior and subordinates to men. They are facing absolute poverty and various forms of discrimination. In rural society, women are facing

more difficulties due to patriarchy system in feudalistic structure of society (Khan, 2006).

However, Pakistani society recognizes the killing of someone as the case of *Karo Kari*. Honor killing in Pakistan is rampant, particularly in Sindh. It's trend has increased due to various reasons. Media reporting, according to some analysts, has further highlighted the issue. This trend is being analyzed to find out how to reduce the growing incidents of honour-killing. Due to recent media attention, the problem of honor killing has come under increasing global spotlight. In various countries throughout the world particularly in the Middle East and some parts of South Asia, women who being dishonor to their families, attempted murder and other form of corporal punishment have been reported. Woman from other faith may also be subject to similar attitudes from within their own communities. In our society women are deprived of rights which are denied due to a distorted and erroneous interpretation of religion, especially of Islam (Habib, 2001).

In Pakistan, the honor killing is age-old social evil. People of Pakistan are suffering from the scourge of honor killing. In Punjab, it is known as *Siyah Kari*. In Sindh, it is known as *Karo Kari*. Pakistan being not so educated, urbanized mainly consist of rural areas having less literacy rate than urban areas, that is why; honor killing is predominant in rural areas though urban areas are not immune from this pandemic.

There is high incidence of honour-killing in Balochistan. Reporting of honor killing of six (6) women in Baluchistan caused political uproar. It was unfortunately that the home minister & Nazim of Nasirabad were "proud" of tradition. In this incident six women were killed after being declared as *Kari*, according to tribal elders in Nasirabad Baluchistan. The Supreme Court had taken *Suo Motto* notice. Thus, 22 persons were arrested. 'Women in Pakistan face the threat of multiple forms of violence including sexual violence by family members, strangers, and State agents, including spousal murder, and being burned, disfigured with acid, beaten and threatened' (Khalid Mahmood, 2003).

The honor killing is stigma on the society; however, it is prevalent in our society, particularly in upper part of Sindh, Larkana division. This division is bordering Baluchistan; therefore, this region is prone to this tradition of honor killing more than any part of Sindh.

Besides, this region is also prone to other crimes, all related to human rights violation. The state appears to have failed to protect the life of citizen which is its main responsibility. Killing in honor is routine & daily affair with ceaseless impunity. Therefore, its study of causes and consequences will greatly help to address the issue. The woman is the mainly victim of this heinous crime.

This paper explores following research questions:

- What are the major causes of honor killing in Larkana region?
- What are the solutions to the problem?

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research will be exploratory and descriptive based upon primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through interviews from respondent's victims, accused, police officers, Advocates, and Judges etc. Researcher conducted interviews of 50 victims and conducted 20 interviews in each category of mothers, fathers of victims, accused, advocates, judges, and journalists. Further, the data about registered cases was collected from the police stations. In these districts many countries live and share common social values. However, some communities strongly believe in tribal norms and traditions. Geographical features of these districts are distinctive in native. This study will help the policy makers and social scientists to find ways and means to improve situation.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

##### **Honor killing in Sindh in general and Larkana Division in particular**

Throughout the history of Sindh, this evil remained major source of stress for women. Efforts were taken by British and native rules to eliminate honour-killing but the issues has been unresolved. As Governor of Sindh, Sir Charles Napier struggled to put down karo Kari which existed in the province. It was found that women declared as *karo-kari* were hanged by their husbands, upon the most frivolous pretexts, the pretending that their wives had committed suicide. Sir Charles issued in 1847 very stringent orders to all magistrates throughout the province to stop serious crime, and his own views on this subject are contained in the subjoined proclamation, which was circulated far and wide among the inhabitants of Sindh:

“People of Sindh – the government have forbidden you to murder your wives, a crime commonly committed when the British conquered this country. This crime of woman murder is forbidden by the religion of the English conquerors; who shall dare to oppose their law? Woe be to those who do. But this is not all, ye Sindhians, Balochis and Muhammadans, murder is prohibited by your prophet. You, who murder your wives, outrage you, own religion as much as you outrage ours! This the government will not permit. Government therefore visited with punishment such murderers, and the crime began to disappear. Some foolish men among you believe that the English are easily deceived, and you have, in a vast number of cases, hanged your wives, and then pretended that these poor women committed suicide. Do you imagine that government believes that these women committed suicide? Do you believe that government can be deceived by such villainy that it will let women be thus murdered? If you do believe this, it becomes necessary to teach you how erroneous are your judgment and if you persevere, your sufferings shall be great. You are therefore thus solemnly warned, that in whatever village a woman is found murdered, a heavy fine shall be imposed on all, and rigidly levied. The government will dismiss the Kardar. It will order all her husband’s relations up to Karachi, and it will cause such danger and trouble to all, that you shall tremble if a woman is said to have committed suicide in your district, for it shall be an evil day for all in that place. You all know that what I say is just, for never was woman known to have committed suicide in Sindh till the law decreed that husband should not murder their wives, and this year vast numbers of women have been found hanged; gross falsehoods have been put forth by their families that they committed suicide; but woe be to their husbands! For the English Government will not be insulted by such felons. The murderers shall be sent to labor far away over the waters and heard of no more”.

The study indicates that honor-killing is caused because of illiteracy and the lack of enforcement of law and order. Majority of fathers of the victim believe that lack of enforcement of rule of law is the major cause of honor-killing. This view is also supported by majority of journalists. Nerveless, the majority of accused believe that illiteracy is the major cause of honor-killing. This conclusion is supported by Judges and majority of advocates due to dominance of

feudalism. Federal system not only encouraged the honour-killing but also celebrated as noble act (Ahmed, Shuja, 2012).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The great irony of life in our part of the world is that, while on the one hand women are given highest esteem and regard, they are also the victims of the worst forms of violence and discrimination. One of the main causes of this contradictory behavior pattern is the ignorance of, and discontentment with, the definition of her biological ranking and her role in the society.

The issue of discrimination against women is rooted in the notion supported by many that a woman is inferior to man in her creation and thus her identity, respect, achievements and even her human status is second rate compared to those of a man. This devaluation of woman and the discrimination based on it does not conform to our religious, cultural or human ideals but continues to prevail as an assumed rule of nature, idolized and reinforced regularly, leading to a chaotic misbalance in the society.

The differences between men and women need to be realized and celebrated as they are created equally as human beings but differently in characteristics and qualities. A neat and equitable balance has been struck by nature that should not become the excuse for discrimination or degradation of either one of the genders.

The social roles of the genders vary according to socio-cultural practices and biological inclinations. They are neither divine ordination nor based on natural endowments, mental, physical or spiritual. The conflict is deeper than that of gender superiority which is used as an excuse to impose power and control. That is the ultimate objective and basically a form of psychological complex and results in a reciprocal action from the other side to protect and enforce leading to discord and hatred.

The hatred and a battle to superimpose one's status on the other is not the solution. Manhood and womanhood are complementary, and harmony lies in according to each other equal status and due respect. Matters of supremacy and ranking are best left to God. Honor crimes or crimes of passion are also a form of expressing the desire to control the woman, denying her the individual human status that she rightfully deserves.

The strong familial identity of the woman and her subordinate status in the family, and ultimately in society, leads to her subjection to violence and the creation of a vicious cycle of power and control like other weaker sections of the society. Further community criticism was used as a tool against women. It was not used positively to eradicate social evils including honour-killing (Ahmed, Shuja, 2012). A collective solution is required to break the vicious circle involving the feudal system and its followers and supporters, the police, and the ignorant society once the position of women is realized and the shackles of slavery are removed from her, then only can society develop to reflect human ideals where ruthless crimes such as honor killing will be unknown and unheard of.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Education has a vital link with social behavior. Awareness about social issues such as honor killing should start at the primary level to change the mindset of young individuals positively from the outset.
- The government should allocate further funding to education especially in policy planning, research, and curriculum development.
- The government should take further initiatives to promote economic and social empowerment of women to make them self-sufficient, independent, and confident to claim their rights as individual citizens of Pakistan and become productive members of society, be it in the sphere of home or commerce.
- Laws which are discriminatory and controversial such as the Hudood Laws should be re-examined and revised to rectify or remove the contentious issues.
- The access to justice Program already in progress should be expanded and specialist projects should be initiated to address problems such as honor killing.
- Measures should be taken for the provision of HR capacity building in the judiciary as well as the police department.
- The condition and management of the institution of dar-ul-aman, which is a vital link in the protection of women through law, should be given due attention and a proper system must be

developed to ensure that the institution serves its purpose effectively.

- The judiciary should award exemplary punishments in instances of heinous crimes such as honor killing, to discourage and deter people from committing them.
- The self-arbitration practice in criminal cases should be policed effectively and eliminated or transformed rather into a mediation and counseling service for civil cases under the supervision of the courts.
- The tribal elite should be involved in debate and discussion to address and rectify the social evils against women and other weaker segments of society. The need of change the mindset and attitudes must be stressed. Laws reflect the public opinion; the change in mindset will lead to change in discriminatory laws.
- The feudal mindset should be altered through education since adherence to tribal philosophy leads to evil practices.
- Seminars etc. should be taken further down to district and school levels specifically in the affected areas.
- NGOs, media, politicians, poets, writers, journalists, ulema and other stakeholders can play a vital role in developing awareness and positive attitudes by their relevant modes of communication to the masses.
- Civil organizations and individuals should focus on issues such as the elimination of evil practices, endorsement of social and economic activity of women, promotion of gender equality and discourage any form of discrimination towards any member of society.
- Highlight Islamic values and teachings about the equality of all members of humans, above all differences, and the collective social responsibility in terms of rights and duties.
- The new trend in police training should be welcomed and promoted at all levels.
- Workshops should be organized to train officers in effective investigation, evidence handling etc. specially to improve their efficiency in dealing with susceptible crimes such as honor killing.
- Sensitization of the police should be carried out for proper dealing with the victims and their families.



- Problems faced by the police must be addressed and proper research must be conducted to discover and resolve problems.
- Human rights and ethics should be included as a regular course in the police training curriculum.
- Accomplishments and achievements of the police should be positively rewarded and encouraged.

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