

## Honour Killing – An Insane to Human Kind



### Sociology

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### ABSTRACT

*Violence strikes women from all kinds of backgrounds and of all ages. It can happen at work, on the street, or at home. Violence against women is a global phenomenon prevalent in all societies, but differs in its form from one society to another, depending on the level of development and the extent of patriarchal control within the family, as this system prevailed in human societies for thousands of years*  
*Hence, the paper tries to bring forth the causes, consequences and combating strategies of the barbaric practice of honor killing also known as honour murder i.e. the killing of a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief of the perpetrators that the victim has brought dishonor upon the family or community which is on rise in recent days.*

### Introduction

Women are often subjected to violence due to the prevailing cultural norms and socialization patterns in South Asia in general, and in India in particular. Despite India's efforts to pursue several policies for empowering women, violence against women is widespread. In India where almost half of the population is women, they have always been ill-treated and deprived of their right to life and personal liberty as provided under the constitution of India. Women are always considered as a physically and emotionally weaker than the males, whereas at present women have proved themselves in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men due to their hard work whether at home or working places.

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The National Crime Records Bureau shows that the West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh have earned the dubious distinction of leading a list of states where crime against women in 2011 was highest. With 7.5 per cent share of the country's population, West Bengal accounted for nearly 12.7 per cent of total crime against women by reporting 29,133 cases and Andhra Pradesh, accounting for nearly 7 per cent of the country's population, recorded 12.4 per cent of total crime against women with 28,246 cases.

### Why Violence Against Women

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, Language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Article 2). But women are subjected to many forms of discriminations and injustices irrespective of their social, educational and economic status.

Discrimination against girls and women in the developing world is a devastating reality. It results in millions of individual tragedies, which add up to lost potential for entire countries. Studies show there is a direct link between a country's attitude toward women and its progress socially and economically. The status of women is central to the health of a society. If one part suffers, so does the whole (Julie Mullins, 2013)

Power inequalities between women and men and the masculine culture are the major sources of violence. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social process rather than the biological

### HONOUR KILLINGS:

**Honour killing**, also known as *honour murder* is the **killing** of a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief of the perpetrators that the victim has brought dishonor upon the family or community. Honor killings are directed mostly against women and girls, but have been extended to men.

In other words it is defined as a death that is granted to a woman of the family for marrying against the parent's desires, having extramarital and premarital relationships, marrying within the same gotra or outside one's caste or marrying a cousin from a different caste. This is a practice that spread over such a large geographical area that we cannot isolate.

While statistics are hard to come by due to non-reporting of such crimes, in 2000, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated at 5,000 the number of women who had been victims of honour crimes each year throughout the world. But, according to most of the organisations who have been keeping a watchful eye on the situation, the real figure could be three to four times greater. It shows that women have no choice in her life.

According to Amnesty International, honour killings are the most widespread in Pakistan. A report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) states that 647 women were killed in the name of "honour" in 2009 -- up by 13 per cent from 2008 when 574 such killings were reported.

A June 2008 report by Turkey's Human Rights Directorate says that in Istanbul alone, there is one honour killing every week and over 1,000 were killed during the last five years.

It is said that more than 1,000 young people in India have been done to death every year owing to 'Honour Killings' linked to forced marriages and the country needs to introduce stringent legislation to deal firmly with the heinous crime. So far, there is no specific law to deal with honour killings.

Many such killings are happening with regularity in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh. These are socially sanctioned by caste panchayats and carried out by mobs with the involvement of family members. Causes of Honor Killing

There are various reasons why people or family members decide to kill the daughter in the name of preserving their family honour. The most obvious reason for this practice to continue in India are:

#### 1. Power Inequalities

In a society where women are highly honored since ages and regarded as goddess, wisdom and shakthi, the same women are brutally killed on the name of honour. In majority of the cases, it is power relations where women are expected to be submis-

sive and subordinate. If at all she comes out of that ceiling she will be punished. This is happening if she decides to get married with a person whom she desires. Family expects a girl to listen whatever they say for the benefit of the family prestige. They forget the fact that girl is also a human being having her own likes and dislikes.

## 2. Casteism

Even though the Constitution of India clearly stated that there must not be any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed and sex, society is still giving importance to caste. Sociologists also believe that the reason why honour killings continue to take place is because of the continued rigidity of the caste system. Many honor killings occurring due to the casteism in India. Parents feel that marrying outside of their own caste is dishonor to the family and brings the family's status down in the eyes of society.

## 3. Patriarchal Traditions

As India is the land where patriarchal systems are deep rooted, woman has no right to take individual decisions on her own. If takes any step without fathers consent, he acts as a dictator rather than a care giver forgetting the human relations. Because our socialization process inculcating the traits of innocence and obedience to girl and dominance and powerfulness to boy since their childhood. Hence automatically they tend to exhibit the same at the later ages.

### b). Strategies to Combat the menace

**Mindset has to be changed to arrest the stereotyped attitudes:** Caste, community, region, and other peripheral factors play an important role in the Indian marriage system. But it is the need of the hour to change the mindset of the parents that there is no association between caste and leading happy life.

**Women must be economically empowered:** To become powerful, women must be empowered to tackle the problems. Economic empowerment will definitely builds confidence to fight against the evils

**Stringent laws should be enforced to prevent the brutal practices:** So far, there is no specific law to deal with honour killings. The murders come under the general categories. Hence active law enforcement and serious strict sanctions is the only solution to this most dishonorable practice

**Dissemination of Legal Knowledge:** Media can play a bigger role in fighting against castism and consequences of anti social practices which throws human kind into troubles. Various women pro legislations must be informed to women folk to build confidence to lodge a complaint if at all they come across any danger as the no evil can be curbed without reporting.

**Registration of Marriages:** In order to avoid unnecessary hassles and harassment from external sources directed against the couple who are intending to marry, it is always desirable to register their marriages according to Special marriage Act

**Counselling:** Apart from legislations to effectively curb honour related crimes, it is equally important that the steps should be taken to organise counselling programmes for the village communities and the youth.

## Conclusion

The violence against women is an integral part of their lives leading to their disgrace and resulting in regulating or negating their degrees of freedom. The poor existing social conditions have aggravated crimes against girls and women beginning even from before birth, in the form of foeticide, infanticide, dowry deaths and honor killings. In the recent past, there appears to be a substantive increase in the number of honor killing which are considered particularly vicious among crimes against women. Women are the victims of many forms of inequalities and violation of basic rights. Recently, there has been a spate of honor killings in the country and this has led the government to decide what laws should be put in place to stop this heinous crime. Even though prohibition of unlawful assembly bill, 2011 is there still special Law is essential to curb the menace.

But it is well known fact that law alone cannot mitigate the problem. The usual remedy to such murders is to suggest that society must be prevailed upon to be more gender-sensitive and discard prejudice of caste and class. Efforts should be made to sensitize people on the need to do away with social biases. But equally, it should be made clear that there is no escape for those who take justice into their own hands.

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