

## Honor Killing: A Dishonour to the Dignity of Women



### Education

**KEYWORDS :** Honor Killing, Forms of Honour Killing Dignity of Women.

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### ABSTRACT

*The present paper shares the author's concern about heinous crime against woman named Honor Killing. There are prevalent various reasons which amount to dishonoring of the family. Many incidents have been cited for proving the fact that the phenomenon is prevalent in many parts of the world, but in certain communities to greater extent. Encouragement to honor killing is attributed to the factors like philosophical inputs, cultural practices, legal code of the country and gender specified stereotype roles. It occurs when women assert to their rights, decisions and choices, which is considered against to the traditional values and norms of the family. Author believes Indian society is a regressive one, where woman is experiencing both shine and shame. There is a big section that even could not avail the basic human rights in this democratic country. This section is frequently subjected to crimes like honor killing. Further, attitude change is the biggest hope for changing this mindset. High frequency and intensity of punishers and low frequency and intensity of reinforcers in the event of honor killing should be the action principles. Finally author suggests some measures as punishers and reins forcners for practical purposes on legal, political, social, economic and educational fronts.*

### Introduction

Occurring in a broad range of non-western and western countries, violence committed against women in the name of family honor has been viewed in several ways, including as a crime, as gendered violence, or as a violation of human rights (Cooney, 2014). Women constitute a disadvantageous group, unfortunately not by virtue of nature but due to societal factors. The forms of crime against women may take form of domestic violence, state sponsored violence, war violence, sexual violence, date violence and the like. India has a peculiarity of having shine and shame at same time. We kill the unborn girls in mother's womb and at the same time observe Navratre in obeisance to Goddess Durga. Lot many cultural rituals and traditions of ours can be sited to prove this point. Baker et. al. (1999) argues that cultural and personal systems of honor that depend on the behaviour of others are an integral part of the killing of women by their families or intimates.

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) states that "Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with."

### Forms of Honour Killing

Women are expected to conform to the wishes of their elders who are presumed to be acting in for the greater good of the family as a whole. Those who insist upon their autonomy are considered selfish and disruptive to the family and its honour is expected to face following forms of dishonour:

#### Forced Abortion

If a woman becomes pregnant before marriage and this is unknown outside the family circle, it may be considered a better solution to procure an abortion procedure. However women's consent to such medical procedures is not acquired.

#### Abduction and Imprisonment

If a girl runs away from home to seek protection after finding she is subjected to abduction and imprisonment by their families. In other countries like Afghanistan if a girl running away from home is considered to have committed a criminal and may be imprisoned and returned into the hands of her family.

#### Forced Marriage

In some cases girls may be forced into marriage. Such marriages may involve an undesirable spouse who is unable to contract a

marriage. It results in abusive and may be intended as a punishment against the woman as well as a means of restoring 'honour'.

#### Honour Suicide

Where 'honour' killings are robustly prosecuted, families may deploy a strategy of forcing women to kill themselves in order to remain technically innocent of murder. Self-killing of a girl results due to unbearable pressures, restrictions and family's dis-favour or abuse.

#### Honour Killing

'Honour' killings, is the planned murder. It is also less organised. In it logic of honour is used to rationalise the killing. It results as one transgressed the boundaries of one's culture and tradition.

#### What amounts to Dishonouring?

- Running away, coming home late
- Ideological differences
- Refusing arranged marriage
- Relationships outside marriage
- Relationships outside the approved group
- Inappropriate make up, or dress
- Losing of virginity
- Homosexuality
- Forced marriage
- Suspicions of infidelity
- Promiscuity flirting
- Desire for divorce

#### Some Glaring Incidents of the Crime

As per the report of International Resource Centre on Honour Based Violence Awareness Network there are approximately 5000 honour killings internationally per year. Approximately in India 1000, in Pakistan 1000 and in UK 12 honour killings occur per year.

In India, honor killing is most prevalent in many states. In many instances, khap panchayats or caste councils order the killings for marrying against their wishes.

In Feb. 2002 Nitish Katara was murdered by Vikas, the brother of his girlfriend. Manoj, 23 and Babli 19, eloped from their village in Kaithal district and got married in Chandigarh in April 2007. Their bodies were found in a canal on June 23, 2007. On May 16, 2008 Sunita's and her boyfriend Jassa 22, both were dragged into waiting cars, driven away and strangled. Their bodies, half-stripped, were laid out on the dirt outside. Balkar was gunned down in the market and Ravindar was killed inside their

house at their village in Taran Taran, by members of the girl's family on Jan. 27, 2009. In June 2010 Asha a 19 years old girl was tortured to death along with her 20 years boyfriend Yogesh Kumar by her family in Swroop Nagar. On June 21, 2010, in Haryana, after the bodies of a young couple whose relationship had been condemned for violating kinship rules were found hanging from a tree, six family members were arrested for murder. In Hissar June 26, 2010 (IANS) a 28-year-old Anup Kumar, a computer operator of a local school was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a hotel room. In April 2012 Deepti Chikara a 26 years old teacher was killed by her brother and uncle in Sultanpuri as she married to a boy of so called lower caste. In Delhi, Bhawna from Rajasthan a 21-year-old final year student of Sri Venkateswara, college was allegedly murdered by her family in November 2014 because she had married a Punjabi boy from another caste and region.

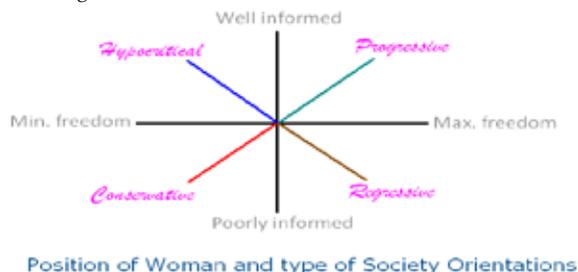
The incidents quoted here are a fraction of the actual figure, unfortunately majority goes without reporting.

**Common Features of These Killings**

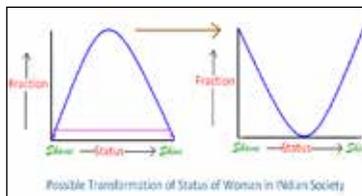
This practice is more prevalent among Muslim, Rajput & Jat communities in India and elsewhere. Honor killing murders are almost always committed by relatives of women and women has never been spared from punishment. Society protects the killers or even dare to appreciate the act in open and killers take pride in doing so. Provision of punishment under law does not have deterrent effect, probably due to slow justice delivery system. Generally reporting of such crime and documentation is very poor.

**Analysis of Nature of Societies in Terms of Woman Position and Honor Killing**

"Honor"-based violence (HBV) is increasingly recognized as form of violence against women and girls, but is neither fully conceptualized nor integrated into risk management strategies that are increasingly used to address gender-based violence (Payton, 2014). The amount of freedom of woman and the extent of access to information are the two determining parameters of predicting nature of a society in respect position of woman. Here freedom means legal one, which grants right for freedom of choices including the choice of life partner. Access to information means access to every piece of information which she needs to know for effective exercising of her rights and opposing violation of the same. The combination of these two parameters leads to following types of societies as shown in the figure.



In a progressive society we don't see crimes like honor killing. Conservative societies are the most vulnerable to such crimes. Hypocritical and Regressive ones are not probability free societies. India in general has a regressive kind of society, which guarantees freedom to woman on paper but at the same time been ill serious on its implementation. Ideally there should be a normal distribution as far as status of woman when plotted with respect to fraction. But actually this curve is being inverted very quickly as shown in the following figure.



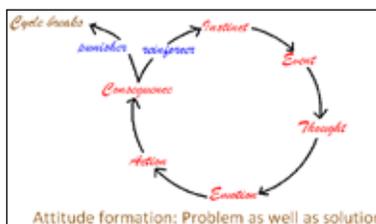
Divided in to a group one exclusively enjoys shine and other half is facing shame. The shame is mainly by virtue of poor access to information, may take different forms as follows.

Poor access to education/literacy/Identity/Language, poor awareness of rights and available help in crisis situation, poor communication and expression opportunities, poor participation in democratic institutions, poor access to decision making process in family and work place, poor access to financial assets, poor access to privacy/confidentiality and the like.

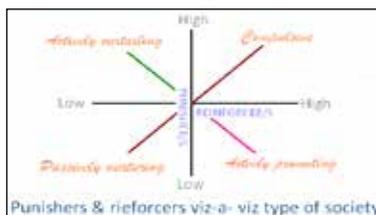
**What is the Way Out?**

There is an urgent need to identify the factors that impede battered women's flight from violent relationships (Barnett, 2000). To improve the situation we need take some steps.

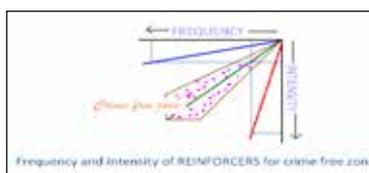
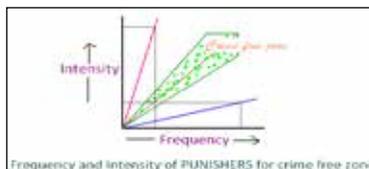
Attitude is the single largest factor determines our action. It involves a cycle as given below. This cycle can be broken anywhere to prevent crime, however is not the easiest option due to compulsive human behaviour of humans.



Depending upon punishers and reinforces applied, societies can be divided in four categories as shown in the following figure.



Actively curtailing society is the hope for eliminating honor killing. This can be executed by low frequency and intensity of reinforce and doing exactly reverse in respect of punishers.



Actively curtailing society applying appropriate application of reinforces and punishers can be visualized by taking following measures.

**On legal Front:** stringent laws, implementation and fast justice delivery to the victim.

**Political Front:** honor killing accused should not be given political shelter, looking for votes in honor killing amounts to inhuman politics.

**Social Front:** Make honor killing a social evil rather than social glorification. Institutions like khap panchayat should curtail from taking law in their hands. Character or izarat (dignity) needs to be redefined as 'ones behaviour according to designation' rather than in respect of sexual behaviour only.

**Economic Front:** woman should inherently be given access on equal basis as in present context finance is a big power to bring respect to any one.

**Educational Front:** People should be educated for understanding complementary nature of two sexes, than viewed as opposites.

I hope this paper can open the discussion on inhuman treatment of women in our society. "To gain a better understanding of the different cultural perspectives of honor and shame that inspire honor killing, it is necessary to interrogate the accounts of these defendants and their understanding of actions as honourable and dishonourable (Dogan,2014). Finally, I would like to put as strongly as one can think "THERE IS NO HONOR IN HONOR KILLING", "Let us re define HONOR to eliminate Honor Killing".

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