

Types Of Honour Killings

1. Honour Killings For seeking Marriage

The notion of the defilement of the male honour has extended over time to include not only sexual 'misdemeanour' but also other acts of male control. Expressing a desire to choose a marriage partner and actually contracting a marriage with a partner of one's choice in a society where the majority of marriages are arranged by parents, are considered major acts of defiance. Such acts are perceived to defile the honour of man to whom the young woman belongs and who can expect a bride price at her marriage. Women who marry a man of their choice moreover take recourse to state law, placing themselves outside the traditional scheme; by the public nature of their action they shame their guardians leading them to resort to violence to restore their honour. Marriage arrangements are delicate and seen to involve serious balancing acts; any disturbance of this balance by a woman refusing a father's choice are considered to affect the father's standing in society.

Sometimes women are killed for alleged sexual impropriety in a marriage arrangement context when different male relatives have different marital arrangements in mind and the woman is caught in between conflicting requirements of obedience. 17-year-old Nagina Bibi in Tarali Kalan near Islamabad, was engaged by her father to her cousin, but her brother wanted her to marry his wife's brother. After her brother saw her talk to the cousin chosen by their father on the street, he and another brother on 14 April 1994 reportedly tied Nagina with a rope to a wooden post in their home, sprinkled kerosene on her and set her on fire. Neighbours had her admitted to a hospital with 75% burns, which the family claimed to be due to stove bursting. Nagina told doctors that her brother had set her on fire because she had disobeyed him. The Progressive Women's Association investigated the case and had a case registered against the brother. Nagina died after 23 painful days in hospital.

Watta-Satta marriages in which siblings are married to siblings of another family, put an additional burden on women to abide by parental marriage arrangement and to neither refuse nor seek divorce. All marriage arrangements are understood to be about balance, involving the transfer of women for an appropriate bride price; in Watta-Satta marriages the balance additionally involves exchange of siblings. The two couples so linked must remain perfectly balanced for the sake of the honour of the parents responsible for the arrangement.

2. Honour Killings For Seeking Divorce

Several women who have sought divorce through the courts have been injured, killed or never been heard of again. Seeking divorce gives a strong signal of public defiance which calls for punitive action against such women to restore male honour within the traditional honour scheme.

One of the most recent honour killings of a woman seeking divorce occurred in the afternoon of 6 April 1999, when 29-year-old Samia Sarwar, a mother of two young sons, was shot dead in her lawyer's office in Lahore. Her lawyer, Hina Jilani was also

threatened but not injured. A para-legal trainer Shahtaj Qizalbash was abducted by the killers but eventually released. The apparent reason for the killing, threats and abduction was that Samia's family felt their honour defiled by her disobedience to their wishes and her persisting in seeking a divorce from her abusive husband.

The Sarhad Chambers of Commerce and Industry, of which Samia's father is president and several religious organizations on 8 and 9 April 1999 demanded that Hina Jilani and Asma Jehangir be dealt with in accordance with "tribal and Islamic law" and be arrested for "misleading women in Pakistan and contributing to the country's bad image abroad". Several people belonging to religious organizations issued fatwas (religious edicts) against both women and promised to pay rewards to anyone who would kill them. In late April 1999, Asma Jehangir filed an F.I.R with police against 16 people, including prominent businessmen in Peshawar, for issuing death threats against her and her sister. She also called on the government to set up a judicial inquiry headed by a supreme court judge to investigate almost 300 cases of honour killings reported last year in Pakistan. No action is known to have been taken on either issue.

3. Honour Killings For Rape

For a woman to be targeted for killing in the name of honour, her consent...or the lack of consent... in an action considered shameful is irrelevant to the guardians of honour. Consequently a woman subjected to rape brings shame on her family just as she would when engaging in a consensual sexual relationship. "A woman raped shames the community and dishonours the man", according to Nafisa Shah [Nafisa Shah: A Story in Black: Karo Kari killings in upper Sindh, Reuter Foundation Paper 100, Oxford, 1998, p.56. Statutory Law under the Zina ordinance does not strictly differentiate between rape and fornication either, in fact, if a raped woman cannot prove that she did not consent to intercourse, she is considered to have committed zina, fornication, which attracts severe punishments.] ...it does not dishonour the rapist.

In March 1999, a 16-year-old mentally retarded girl, was reportedly raped by a junior clerk of the local government of agriculture who took her to a hotel in Parachinar, N.W.F.P. The girl's uncle filed a report about the incident with police who apprehended the accused but handed over the girl to her tribe, in the Kurram Agency, a tribal area which has its own legal and judicial system under provisions of the constitution of Pakistan. A jirga of Pushtun Tribesmen decided that she had brought shame to her tribe and that its honour could only be restored by her death. She was shot dead in -front of a tribal gathering. The rapist was reportedly detained by police, for 'his own protection' when tribesmen demanded that he be handed over to them so they could execute him in accordance with tribal traditions. An Islamabad-based NGO, Sahil, in a press release expressed its shock at the killing, saying it had been carried out not by an individual overcome with emotion, but by a community which sat in judgement and pronounced the victim guilty.

4. Killings Under The Pretext Of Honour:

"Honour Killings was punishment for violating the honour codes but the tribes have subverted the custom of killing not for honour but to obtain the compensation that the

tribal settlement awards to the aggrieved person", Nafisa Shah summarizes [Nafisa Shah: A Story in Black: Karo Kari Killings in Upper Sindh, Reuter foundation paper 100, Oxford, 1998, p.5]. In honour killings if both the karo and kari are killed, the matter ends; if only the kari is killed and the karo escapes...as is often the case... he has to compensate the affected man, for the damage to honour he inflicted, for the woman's worth who was killed and to have his own life spared.

This scheme provides easy opportunity for the unscrupulous to make money, obtain a woman in supposed compensation or to conceal other crimes, in the near certainty that honour killings, if they come to court at all, will be dealt with leniently. As Nafisa Shah puts it, a whole 'honour killing industry' has sprung up with a range of stake holders including tribes people, police administration and tribal mediators. "Vested interests...use the excuse of honour as a blanket cover for a multitude of sins".[Newline, April 1998, p.18].

The lure of monetary gain appears to have motivated many men to accuse their mothers, wives or female relatives of dishonouring their families and killing them in order to extract a compensation from the alleged karos who escape the killing.

The desire to obtain land may also lie behind some fake honour killings. "Land is the main issue in Sindhi society", a journalist in Larkana said to Amnesty Inter, "all the rest follows from that. If a woman owns land, her brother may kill her to get her land; but even poor families now-a-days imitate this pattern even though there is no property to grab, simply to ascertain themselves as equal in the system".

Unable to repay loans, some men are known to have killed a woman of their own family to implicate someone in the debtors family to ensure the loan would be extinguished in compensation.

Nafisa Shah reports that a new twist to seeking pecuniary benefit in honour killings is emerging among the Sabzoi tribe in Kandhkot District. Here a kari is not killed, but returned to her family with the promise that she would be declared 'white' and acceptable if the family pays a heavy fine.

Nafisa Shah concludes that 'the honour killing industry' turns the honour upside down and indicates its degeneration. Women have monetary worth in themselves in tribal society and can be exchanged for money, but to knowingly kill them on false charges of sexual activity for monetary purposes is equivalent to prostituting them. "For in the honour system to use a woman to make money would be a dishonourable act".

5. Punitive Domestic Violence Against Women

Honour killings are but an extreme form of violence against women which appears to be approved by wide sections of society of Pakistan and is ignored by the state. Much of domestic violence in Pakistan is meted out to women in a habitual manner, arising from a male conviction that women deserve no other treatment. However some violence is deliberate and punitive, intended to punish a woman for perceived insubordination which

translates in to an unpardonable transgression of a family or tribal norm.

The annual report of 1998 of the HRCP states bluntly: "Woman's subordination remained so routine by custom and traditions, and even putatively by religion, that much of the endemic domestic violence against her was considered normal behaviour...Domestic violence was common. A sample survey showed 825% of women in rural Punjab feared violence resulting from husband's displeasure over minor matters; in the most developed urban areas 52% admitted being beaten by husbands...Burning by husbands or in-laws remained one extreme and widely occurring form of violence in Punjab. [The State of Human Rights in 1998, 1999, p.216 and p.10]. The survey found that more than two-thirds of both males and females considered disobedience a sufficient reason for beating. It also established that women in paid employment who had thus gained a degree of independence were more liable to physical abuse than women doing unpaid labour.

Shanaz Bokhari of Progressive Women's Association in Islamabad told Amnesty International that since March 1994, when the organization was set up, it monitored 1,600 cases of women burned in their homes in the twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad alone.

Police if they register a case at all, often accept bribes, then manipulate evidence and use sections of the penal code carrying lower penalties. They usually accept husbands' claims that the stove burst was accidental.

Courts, too, frequently side with the offenders and utilize the slightest element of doubt to acquit offenders. Due to social pressures witnesses rarely come forward, and the victims assuming that they will be cured do not wish to charge family members they have to return to or who may make life difficult for their children. Shanaz Bokhari reported that of the 60 cases brought to prosecution (out of 1,600 recorded cases), only two led to convictions. Even when guilt is established, the laws of Qisas and Diyat facilitates compromise and protects the perpetrators from punishment.

Given a close link between woman's conformity to customary norms of chastity and the honour of family or tribe, insulting or humiliating women in an easy way to inflict to their families or tribes.

6. Women Trying To Escape Tribal 'Justice'
Girls and women who apprehend being targeted for killing for alleged breach of customary norms of honour have great difficulties finding refuge. Women are unfamiliar with public transport, usually have no money and are highly visible, suspect and vulnerable to further abuse if they moved around alone. The high proportion of karis killed in comparison to karis able to escape, partly reflects this sheer inability of women to move in the public world.

Moreover, there are few safe places for a woman to escape to. Seeking help outside the family is fraught with danger for a woman. Not only does society blame a woman for being targeted for murder-the popular perception being that she must somehow deserve

it-but by seeking outside help she risks being sent back to her husband or father in whose custody she is perceived to belong. Most important by seeking help outside, she adds shame to her husband and his family by making the issue public. No kari who escapes is ever forgiven, even if her innocence is recognized; some men are known to have traveled hundred's of miles to find and kill karis, even years after the alleged misdeed.

One of the few places where kari is safe is in the home of a tribal sardar [tribal leader], a pir [holy man] or a religious shrine; in these places women are safe but expected to strictly abide by social roles, hence they are not a refuge for girls and women who assert to seek their rights. While providing sanctuary, the shrine cannot give assistance in negotiating a deal, it is merely a place where a woman can rest till she returns to her family.

Few women reach state-run or private shelters of which, as all women's rights activists in Pakistan agree, there are simply not enough to cope with the demand. Those women who succeed in reaching a shelter show a high degree of social responsibility and awareness as they seek to pursue their rights through legal channels-but they may often not be aware that by approaching the state system, they virtually block their return to communities who they have shamed by this step. Moreover, safety in a shelter may be elusive.

The shortcomings of the state run Darul Ammans have been highlighted by many NGO's. They are not easily accessible in a woman's hour of need as entry is only by the orders of a magistrate. Once there, the refuge does not assist women to learn a trade which would make them economically independent later. Women spend their time in the shelter idly, in quasi-detention as they cannot leave except by authoritisation of a magistrate. However, as the person running one of the Darul Ammans in Sindh pointed out to Amnesty International, whatever it's shortcomings, at least the wishes of women are taken in to account with respect to their future.

Unable to escape forced marriages or violence, some women resort to suicide, driven to resort to the most extreme form of violence against themselves. No official figure of women's suicides exist and many women must be assumed to be simply buried to cover up the possible damage to the family's honour. "Suicide becomes the last resort especially for females who have far fewer opportunities than men to carry on a normal life after their family has turned against them. In a great many cases, the mental and physical violence leads to mental illness".

http://www.karokari.com/types_honour.html