

Honour Killing In Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan: A Perceptual Study in Kurram Agency

Arshad Khan Bangash*
Niaz Muhammad**

Abstract

This paper explores cultural and functional dynamics of honour killing in Kurram Agency. A sample size of 377 respondents, comprising 'Malik' was randomly selected to assess the cultural endorsement of honour killing. A conceptual frame work, based on cultural aspect of honour killing and honour killing (Dependent Variable) was developed and crossed tabulated to get inferences through the application of Chi-Square statistics at bi-variate and multi-variate levels (Controlling Marital Status). The study found that a strong belief pertaining to virginity of a woman has significant association with honour killing. Moreover, strict adherence to customary ways of life, restoration of honour with blood, rumors about dishonouring, presenting act of dishonour in media, and practices of honour killing by all tribes and sects residing in the study universe had significant association with honour killing. At multi-variate level, the study found that married people had no room of developing incest relationship and violation of their honour had to meet with ultimate end. The study concluded that honour killing had a strong cultural and social endorsement in the prevalent Pakhtun tribal social order as it was practiced in all tribes and sects in letter and spirit. Educating all stakeholders, pertaining to human loss through honour killing, interpretation of virginity on scientific grounds were presented some of the recommendation in light of the study findings.

Key Words: Maliks, Jirga, Kurram Agency, FATA, Pakhtunwali, and Hamasaya.

Introduction

Honour killing is deliberate murder of a woman either for actual or perceived illegitimate sexual relationships and behaviours (Hassan, 1999; and Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd, 2013) mostly

* Arshad Khan Bangash is an Assistant Professor in Sociology, Department of Sociology and Gender Studies, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda. He can be reached at arshad.dwhh@gmail.com

** Niaz Muhammad is a professor in Sociology at the University of Peshawar. He can be reached at niaz@uop.edu.pk

targeted by male family members (Gill, 2008; and Onal, 2008) or relatives due to their denial of an arranged marriage, fallen victim to a sexual assault (Human Rights Watch, 2004) and extra marital affairs (Joseph and Nagmabadi, 2003). Moreover, desires for seeking employment, forced marriage looking for divorce or disobedience towards family patriarch is also considered as killing of honour.

Structural composition and cultural acceptance are considered the most important determining factors of honour killing worldwide. In many societies, these factors mainly contribute to the promotion of honour-based violence. Cultural violence means that any aspect of culture which could be used in the justification and legitimization of structural violence largely supported by ideology, religion, language and arts; which acceptable in a society (Galtung, 1990). He further deduces that such violent structures leave marks on the human body, mind, and spirit. Along with others, honour killing is also considered a form of violence within the domain of culture as mentioned by Bennett (2007). He further opines that honour killing is projected in the dominant discourses in the form of cultural violence. Furthermore, Kogacioglu (2004) extracts that several related actors like media, activist circles, political parties, state institutions and international governing bodies associate honour crimes with traditions, which are termed as “codes of honour” or in broader context called culture. Cultural norms related to violence are not only evoked at individual level but re-enforced by family and community within the broader social context including media as well (Ullah, 2010).

In contrast to cultural components that enhance the rate of honour killing, structural aspects of society can also perpetuate violence against women, which are socially constructed and are the product of the historical processes (Coomarswamy and Kois, 1999). Baker, Gregware, & Cassidy (1999) contend that honour killing is a complex social phenomenon, having close relevance to patriarchal structure with special emphasis on controlling and dominating women. Gill (2008) elaborates that honour killing is a long standing cultural practice in terms of women subordination and controlling them through necessary means by men segment of society.

Moreover, honour killing in Pakistan is the outcome of socio-cultural values. Jafri (2008) argues that the practice of women

killing in Pakistan is often associated with the restoration of honour usually carried out on the demand of cultural and historical reasons. Smartt (2006) depicts that honour killing is legally and culturally accepted phenomenon in Pakistan. Moreover, honour based killing cannot be subjected and examined from the human rights perspective in Pakistan, as their defenders claims that these customs and traditions are the accepted discourse of country instead of regular laws (Agosin, 2002). The persistence of such killing is immensely supported, practiced, continued and sanctioned by customs under the tribal codes of conduct in Pakistan (Ali, 2001). Chesler and Bloom (2012) argue that honour killing is mostly the product of general disobedience, especially moral and sexual purity of women.

This research study is based on the sole objective to revisit the structural and functional dynamics in the FATA with regards to honour killing by redefining the customary practices, practiced in the study area.

Theoretical Framework

Patriarchy is a social system consisting of social structures and practices based on men domination over women followed by women oppression and exploitation (Walby, 1990). Such sort of societies gives an excessive powers and authority to men over women in a systematic manner to control their social and sexual behaviours within a given social system (Anderson, 2000). Various feminist thinkers linked women subordinate status with patriarchy. Khan (2006) stated that women oppression could be traced back in light of history regarding the creation of patriarchal structure of human societies. Walby (1990) elaborated the concept with the help of a number of classical feminist theories about patriarchy in her book namely 'Theorizing Patriarchy', including Marxist feminism, radical feminism, dual-system theory and liberalism. Marxist feminists considered women subordination because of the domination of capital over labour as a central feature of the social structure. She added that this central feature determine the nature of gender based relations within the social structure. Radical feminist thinkers believed that men as a collectivity dominate and exploited women collectivity and men are the main advantageous group of women exploitation. Moreover, they considered sexualities

as a source of male domination and believed that patriarchy is mainly the outcome of sexuality and reproduction. Dual-system theory theorizes that both Marxist and Radical feminist system of power relations are equally important for the structure of gender roles within a society. Furthermore, inequalities on the basis of genders could be analyzed is the result of patriarchy and capitalism. Liberalists viewed that patriarchy is the result of women denial in different spheres of life. Inconsonance to these explanations, Schneider (1971) linked the concept of honour with social relations and that could be understood as "the ideology of the power holding group which struggles to define, enlarge and protect its patrimony in a competitive arena". Moreover, Kandiyoti (1987) believed that women in traditional societies are responsible for family honour and any violation in this regard can bring dire consequences to them under the normative order of the patriarchal structure.

Methods and Procedures

This research study was carried out in Kurram Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan under the quantitative methodology. Therefore, the most appropriate statistical test and tools were used by covering all the possible logical explanation pertaining to study at hand.

Sample random sampling approach was adopted to make the procedure easier and to increase the efficiency of the researcher in the fieldwork. The data was collected from '*Maliks*' (Tribal Leaders) of the study universe. The selected category of the respondents had an extensive knowledge about the issue and victims of honour killing by virtue of their professional wisdom as members of the '*Jirga*'.

For the collection of the relevant information's from respondents an appropriate sample size of 377 respondents out of the 1612 were randomly selected through proportional allocation method by using the criteria for sample size determination given by (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

A comprehensive likert scale based interview schedule was developed, encompassed all the aspects of the inquiry for the collection of the data. The interview schedule was framed with a dependent variable (honour killing) and independent variable (cultural aspect of honour killing). The collected data was

interpreted at uni-variate level, to display the layout of the data. At bi-variate level, the dependent variable was indexed and crossed tabulated with the independent variable to measure the effects of dependent variable upon independent variable through the application of Chi-Square test statistics.

Moreover, to establish spurious or non-spurious association between variables, multivariate analyses were carried out. The most important variable in the study namely marital status was kept controlled and dependent and independent variables were cross tabulated to find out the relationship that either it is spurious or non-spurious. Chi-Square test was used for comparison and the respective values secured after multivariate analysis were compared with the values at bi-variate level and thus, spurious or non-spurious association was ascertained with the following procedure. If the value of a multivariate table is identical or closer to the maximum values of that variable in any aspect of study at bi-variate level; the association is said to be non-spurious; otherwise, the relationship was identified as spurious.

1.4 Uni-variate and Bi-variate Analysis

Attributes	ylgnortS Agree	eergA	Undecided	Disagree	ylgnortS eergasiD	Bi-Variate
Beliefs in chastity and virginity of a woman	79.1	16.2	11.9	00	00	$\chi^2=24.34$ P=0.0
Strict adherence to customary laws and traditions	72.4	15.6	10.6	1.3	00	$\chi^2= 11.00$ P= 0.027
Restoration of honour with blood	65.0	17	8.5	6.6	2.9	$\chi^2= 14.388$ P= 0.006
Rumors about dishonouring	9.3	22.8	12.5	22	33.4	$\chi^2= 14.186$ P= 0.007
Presentation of dishonouring in the media	70.6	20.4	9.0	00	00	$\chi^2= 15.207$ P= 0.0
Practicing norms of honour by all castes	73.5	13.8	5.6	7.2	00	$\chi^2= 16.310$ P= 0.001

Explanation

The above table illustrates the explanation regarding socio-cultural aspect of honour killing through the following statement both at uni-variate and bi-variate levels. The study found that majority of the respondents 79.1% strongly agreed with the beliefs in chastity and virginity of a women. Moreover, 72.4% respondents showed strong agreement towards strict adherence to customary laws and traditions. In contrast, 33.4% respondents strongly opposed the role of rumors regarding dishonouring. Furthermore, 70.6% respondents strongly recognized the presentation of dishonouring in the media and its role in honour killing. Similarly, 73.5% respondents strongly endorsed the practicing of honour norms by all castes of the study universe.

Furthermore, the above table reflects the association between socio-cultural aspect and honour killing. A highly significant relationship ($P=0.000$) found between the beliefs in chastity and virginity of a woman and honour killing. It could be deduced from the results that women deviation from protecting chastity, modesty and virginity may invite the elimination of violators. Maintaining these virtues has a sound and deep embodiment in cultural and religious perspectives and deviations to these are often met with negative social sanctions. These results are in consonance with Reimers (2007) who concludes that chastity and modesty of a woman is one of the basic and essential components of the family honour. It could also be the result of strong patriarchal structure which deliberately sustains the subjugation of women through discriminatory practices and in return male segment of tribal society always manipulates women virginity, chastity and modesty according to their own andocentric feelings. This male chauvinism further undermines women in decision making process, denial from her legitimate rights and over all freedom. It could be further deduced that in tribal social structure, the concept of honour was believed in the chastity, modesty and virginity of a woman. However, loss of virginity of a woman could not be proved lethal unless it is made public amongst the masses. Confidentiality of woman virginity leaks embodies the male social disgrace. Killing of a woman devoid of virginity on part of male partner often leads to his social defamation and thwarting of his social standing as well.

Moreover, a significant relationship ($P=0.027$) existed between strict adherence to customary laws, traditions and honour killing. Strict adherence to the prevalent customary practices could be adjudged to the social cohesion and integration of the social structure. Failing to adopt, may lead towards the emergence of fissures in the mirror of social structure. These findings had close similarities to Pope (2004) who elaborates that cultural and customary practices have great impact on individual attitudes and their perception about the world. These findings suggest that tribal people followed their own customs and traditions according to the defined codes of '*Pakhtunwali*' (*Pakhtun* code of conduct). It further indicated that tribal people kept their customary laws and traditions even above their religion and formal laws of the state which are prevalent in the settled parts of the country. The strong observance of customary practices might be the result of long standing history of honour killing in the area, which is also evident from '*Turizuna*' (written consensus customary codes of the study universe for tehsils Lower and Upper Kurram Agency). '*Turizuna*' clearly defines both the act and its punishment by stating that "whoever is found committing sexual intercourse with any married women or a widow or a virgin, both the man and woman ought to be killed on the spot" (*Turizuna, Section-50*). The aforementioned text of '*Turizuna*' clearly shows that honour killing is not only considered an accepted act by the local people but endorsed by the British government of that time were also endorsed the same by giving it a legal cover in the form of '*Turizuna*' as well. Structural violence in a society owes its justification in the cultural aspect supported by ideology, customary laws and traditions (Galtung, 1990; and Ali, 2001).

Similarly, a significant relationship ($P=0.006$) observed between the restoration of honour with blood and honour killing. '*Pakhtun*' social order is maintained in a religious procedure, although it lacks a central authority to lead. However, honour related violations have been considered to be met with severe punishment. It could be attributed to maintaining the prevalent social order by providing consistency to the existing culture. Any ignorance or lenience to such act leads to unabated war within the affected families and their respective lineages system as well. These results showed that honour is the top most priority of tribal people and it is not

compromised in any case or at any cost. However, if honour is compromised by any member of the family, his or her death is certain. Such punishment takes place in order to restore honour against shame. Restoration of honour may be possible through washing the stains of dishonour which are faced by the woman family members and her husband. Honour restoration in tribal areas is only possible through slaughter of both the offenders. If they leave the offenders alive, it definitely creates room for taunt to the woman family through successive generations. In this respect, the social pressure of taunt compels the woman family to take severe steps for purifying their honour through the act of killing. These results were in consonance to the findings of Mansur et.al (2009) who claim that restoration of honour is possible through a woman blood. However, the present study reflects that the killings of both the offenders were observed in the study universe.

Notwithstanding, a significant relationship ($P=0.007$) observed between rumors about dishonouring and honour killing. It could be attributed to strong and rigid cultural dynamics, where rumors pertaining to honour are often socially unbearable. Whispering about a woman is almost tantamount to bringing shameful situation for a woman family. The strong homogeneous structure of tribal society never encourage the rumors to creep in as even a person found of guilty has to meet with dire consequences. Any rumor must have some circumstantial evidences to prove it. Rumors in other words may counter produce social pressure which will definitely tarnish the image and social status of that particular family. For removing this stigma from the family threshold, the family members often kill the woman along with her alleged partner. But if the issue is confined only to the false rumors then the spreader of rumor will alone face the cost in terms of punishment. The rumors may also project dishonouring of the family in public and the matter has not been restricted to the four walls of the home. In this case, such stigma can further activate the family members to restore the lost honour by killing both the offenders. The strong patriarchal structure of tribal society does not tolerate any misconduct of women which threatens the reputation of the family and its members. In this patriarchal disposition the woman is sanctified and all the burden of honour lies at her shoulders. Whenever she deviates from the defined norms of expected customary ways and if

someone spread rumor about her, then her sacredness may become questionable and she will alone face the brunt. The present results were in line with Sen (2001) who concludes that rumors and hearsay evidence has significant contribution in instigating honour crimes. The above contention is visualizing rumors in a generalized way and contextualizing the manifestation of honour killing in congruence with rumors and hearsays (Arnold, 2001). To the contrary, while in tribal social organization it is imperative that rumors must be based on facts.

Similarly, a highly significant relationship ($P=0.000$) extracted between presentation of dishonouring in the media and honour killing. Firstly, access of print and electronic media in comparison to other settled parts of the country was very limited in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Secondly, family honour related issues were not in the lime light of the media due to the extreme sensitivity of the matter. It was because of the rigid '*Pakhtun*' culture, amounted such propagation which is highly shameful for the social survival. But if the media reports such incident, it will no doubt pave the way for honour killing of the offenders. Moreover, these results suggest that the respondents still foresee the force and capacity of media in instigating and persuading parties to restore honour by killing the alleged offenders and deviants of honour norms violations. Similarly, it is generally observed that media has great impact on socio-cultural values of the area and vice versa. Therefore, presentation of dishonouring in media enhances the rate of honour based murders. Similar conclusion was also derived by Kogacioglu (2004) who states that media is an influencing source of honour crimes in a society.

Moreover, a significant association ($P=0.001$) observed between practicing norms of honour by all castes and honour killing. These findings attributed towards the prevalence of honour killing as phenomenal in their very social fabrics. Social systems dynamism is dependent on the operational capabilities of these social fabrics. Damage or negativity to any of these social patterns may threaten the very existence of the existing social order. It was evident from the results that there was no exception of castes or clans in observing customary laws about honour. These findings suggested that honour related norms were equally followed in tribal areas. Such equal observance of practicing honour norms reflected that

informal laws of the area had a collective ownership from all the inhabitants irrespective of their caste, creed or even religion. The practice of honour killing was more keenly observed in the local landholding and indigenous tribal population. Irrespective of the above explanation, the practice of honour killing by making sexual contact with the outsider clan or caste were less observable because of their relatively low position as '*Hamasya*' (renter caste, occupational caste or artisan caste). "If anyone is found committing sexual intercourse with his '*hamasya*'s' wife and killed with the woman on the spot, the murderer will be given the benefit of heat of passion. The whole procedure of punishment in such case as explicitly explained in Para-50 of '*Turizuna*', but the accused person has to prove his innocence by his own oath together with nine others" (Turizuna, Section-51). Amnesty International Report (2008) has also thrown light by concluding that the practice of honour killing prevails in all castes and ethnic groups of Iran.

Multivariate Analysis

Marital Status	Statistics
Married	$\chi^2=12.7$ P=0.016
Unmarried	$\chi^2=0.714$ P=0.398

Controlling marital status, the relationship between honour killing and cultural aspect was significant ($P<0.016$) in married people. However, such relationship between the variables was non-significant ($P>0.398$) in unmarried people. These results indicated that honour related crimes had severe and proactive outcomes for married men and women. It could be attributed to the patriarchal norms of the universe that had earned enshrinement from religious mode of punishment for both married persons involved in honour violation issues. Moreover, it could further disseminate that married men access to women were easy in patterns of social relationship. However, young and unmarried men and women were closely observed through phenomena of rights and wrong. Involvements of unmarried young couples were always kept in tight social milieu with no tolerance for their interaction. It could be further attributed to the maintenance of the norms of chastity and modesty of a girl, not be violated by any man. These findings supported the inferences

of Murugananthum (2014) that family prefer to kill both daughter and son involved in honour violated acts just to maintain their family honour. Honour killing is an obligatory act within alignment to cultural endorsement for the only purpose of male dominance. It could be extended to both genders without taking into consideration the family and tribe affiliation (Bhatti et. al., 2011; and Phulpoto et. al., 2012).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study discovered various socio-cultural factors leading to the phenomena of honour killing. The study found that cultural traits of the Pakhtun social order were vividly enshrined with the prevalence to the adherence, to the operational customary laws and traditions. Moreover, taking revenge pertaining to honour violated acts were internalized in the local culture from the offenders, had given more imputes of its disposition as making public any family's honour and establishment of incest relationships were to be meet with severe outcomes culminating at the dealt of the offender. Honour killing was so practicing that it had a permanent place of social and cultural practice in all sects and tribes, residing in the study area. In addition, violation of honour by any of the married person of either gender had to meet with ultimate ends. Educating all stakeholders with regards to human loss, interpretation of virginity by revisiting in cultural and physical milieu was presented some of the recommendations in light of the study.

References

- Agosin, M. (2002). *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ali, R. (2001). *The dark side of honor: Women victims in Pakistan*. Lahore: ShirkatGah.
- Amnesty International Report. (2008). Different voices, retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2008/06/different-voices-20080602/> on 28 June 2016.
- Anderson, M.L, (2000). *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspectives in Sex and Gender*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 291.
- Arnold, K.C. (2001). *Are the Perpetrators of Honor Crimes Getting Away with Murder?: Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code Analyzed Under the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, American University International Law Review, 16(5), pp. 1343-1409.
- Baker, N. V., Gregware, P. R., and Cassidy, M. A. (1999). Family Killingfields: Honor rationales in the murder of women. *Violence against Women*, 5(2), 164-184.
- Bennett, J. (2007). *Scratching the Surface: Democracy, Traditions, Gender*, Heinrich Boll Foundation, Lahore, Pakistan. Retrieved on Sept 2, 2012 from https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/scratching_the_surface_commentary.pdf
- Bhatti N., Jamali M. B., Phulpoto N. N., Mehmood T., Shaikh F. M. (2011). Domestic violence against women: A case study of district Jacobabad, Sindh Pakistan. *Asian Social Science* 7, 146-162.
- Chesler, P., and Bloom. N. (2012). Hindu VS Muslim honor killings. *Middle East quarterly*.
- Coomarswamy, R. and Kois, L.M. (1999). *Violence against women*. New York: Transnational.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291-305.
- Gill, A. (2008). 'Crimes of Honour' and violence against women in the UK. *International Journal Comparative and Applied Justice*, 32(2), 243-263.
- Hassan, Y. (1999). The fate of Pakistani women. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on Sept 15, 2013, from <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/25/opinion/the-fate-of-pakistani-women.html>

- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2004). *Honoring the Killers: Justice denied for "honor" crimes in Jordan*, Retrieved August 15, 2011 from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2001/04/05/>
- Jafri, A. H. (2008). *In Honour Killing: Dilemma, Ritual, Understanding*, Karachi Pakistan. Oxford University Press.
- Joseph, S. & Nagmabadi, A. (2003). *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*. Volume 3. BRILL.
- Kandiyoti, D.A. (1987). Emancipated but unliberated. *Reflections on the Turkish case Feminist Studies*, 13: 317-338.
- Khan, S. T. (2006). *Beyond Honour: A Historical Materialist Explanation of Honour Related Violence*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
- Kogacioglu, D. (2004). The Tradition Effect: Framing Honor Crimes in Turkey. *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 15(2):118-151.
- Mansur, et.al. (2009). The Economic Underspinnings of Honor Crimes in Jordan [elektronisk]. Research report. Jordan, Mathlouma. Retrieved from http://mathlouma.com/sites/default/files/study_en.pdf on 23 Jan 2016.
- Murugananthan, S. (2014). Honour Killing' the Menace - A case study in Tamil Nadu. *International Journal of Management Research and Social Science (IJMRSS)*. Vol(1), No(1).
- Onal, A. (2008). *Honour killing: Stories of men who killed*. London, San Francisco: Saqi.
- Phulpoto, N. N., A.B. Shah, and F.M. Shaikh, (2012). *Cultural consequences of karo kari: A case study of jacobabad, sindh, Pakistan*. Australian Journal of Business and Management Research, 2(1).
- Pope, N. (2004). Honour Killings: Instruments of Patriarchal Control, In *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges*, edited by Shehrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo, 101-10. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press.
- Reimers, E. (2007). Representations of an Honor Killing. *Feminist Media Studies*, 7, 239-255.
- Roberts, K., Campbell, G. and Lloyd, G. (2013). *Honor-Based Violence: Policing and Prevention*, CRC Press.
- Schneider, J. (1971). Of vigilance and virgins: Honor, shame and access to resources in Mediterranean societies. *Ethnology*, 10: 2.

- Sen, M. (2001). *Death by Fire: Sari, Dowry Death and Female Infancide in Modern India*. London: Weinfield & Nicolson.
- Smartt, U. (2006). Honour Killing. *Justice of the Peace*, 170,(6), 151-177.
- Turizuna, (1941). *A written customary practices of Kurram Agency*.
- Ullah, M.Z. (2010). *Honour killing in Pakistan under theoretical, legal, and religious perspectives: An analytical study of honour killing abuse and disconnecting Islam from this ancient brutal tradition*. (Unpublished Master's thesis), Malmo (Sweden): Malmo University.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. pp. 3-8.