



## HONOUR KILLING

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### Abstract

*Honour killing is not a new concept but after getting this specific name 'Honour Killing' it becomes familiar among the people throughout the world. In the primitive years it was not known by some easy and understandable names, but the recent development of the media has highlighted this hidden form of crime which might not have faced the justice and punishment. This paper is an effort to explain the concept of the honour killing, its characteristics, causes and results in India. "Honour killings" is a planned, pre-meditated, deliberate act of vengeance, committed most of the times by the family members against other close family members, who dishonored or defamed the pride of their family, caste, race or religious codes through a variety of reasons, including: refusal to the arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, having extramarital and premarital relationships, seeking a divorce from an abusive husband, marrying within the same Gotra or outside one's caste or committing adultery. Honour killing is also called a customary killing which can be an extreme form of domestic violence which is executed with determination and robustness. It reflects control over woman's behavior, feeling of shame and guilt and pressure of the community or religious sentiments or codes.*

**Keywords** - Honour, Killing, Punishment, Ethnicity, Biased, Tradition, Religion



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## Introduction

Honour killing is a brutal practice exercised in more than twenty-five countries throughout the world resulting in the death of thousands of people every year. Different nations with different ethnicities, genders and religions are becoming responsible for this crime favoring gruesome and die hard type of attitude, not ready to compromise at any cost or level even for own blood, lovable and close relatives. The major types of honour killings involve murder, forced suicide and murder for a fabricated offense in the name of honour. This practice is not new but has a full and specified history. With time it changed its face, the cruelties and atrocities of the past modified into a new form with the development of defense mechanism as saving the honour, the honour of the family, the honour of the community, the honour of the race or the honour of the religious codes. The concept of honour killing is not

difficult to understand but now a day's people are getting information about it through various media. Some of the sociologists or agencies have defined it as:-

Hassan (1999)"Honour" killings of women can be defined as acts of murder in which "a woman is killed for her actual or perceived immoral behavior". These killings result from the perception that defense of honour justifies killing a person whose behavior dishonours their clan or family.

Araji (2000) states that: The conception of honour used to rationalize abuse and killing of women is founded on the idea that one person's honour depends on the behavior of others; behavior that must be controlled. Thus, an essential component of one's self-esteem and community status becomes dependent on the behavior of others. This conception is distinct from the notion that honour depends only on an individual's own behavior. Bedel(2004) "honour killing" is defined as the murder or forced suicide of a person by a family or clan member or a hired killer upon the suspicion or insinuation that the person has compromised his or her virtue and thus stained the family's honour (or in other words, upon the suspicion or insinuation that one has been involved- in something immoral and thus, disgraced his or her family). The victims of honour killings, as well as the perpetrators, can be male or female; the offense may be carried out for a variety of explicit or illicit motives. In the cases motivated by perceived sexual transgression, the target of an honour killing may be the victim or the perpetrator (i.e., rapists, victims of rape, homosexuals). Human Rights Watch (2001) A woman can be targeted by (individuals within) her family for a variety of reasons, including: refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce – even from an abusive husband (allegedly) committing adultery. The mere perception that a woman has behaved in a way that "dishonours" her family is sufficient to trigger an attack on her life. Other behaviours that challenge male control (staying out late, smoking, chatting, going to a pub etc.) can also be reasons for 'honour crimes'. Blefsky (2009) In addition, this is a gendered form of violence to which both women and men can fall victim, and of which both men and women can be perpetrators.

From the above definitions of the honour killings we can conclude "Honour killings" is a planned, pre-meditated, deliberate act of vengeance, committed most of the times by the family members against other close family members, who dishonored or defamed the pride of their family, caste, race or religious codes through a variety of reasons, including: refusal to the arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, having extramarital and

premarital relationships, seeking a divorce from an abusive husband, marrying within the same Gotra or outside one's caste or committing adultery. Honour killing is also called a customary killing which can be an extreme form of domestic violence which is executed with determination and robustness. It reflects control over woman's behavior, feeling of shame and guilt and pressure of the community or religious sentiments or codes.

**Characteristics: -**

- **Punishment**

Love is a crime in the many Indian communities and is judged by the heroes of the society who have not seen the face of the balanced judgment but act as god while taking decision for the life and death of those whom he loved the cared most once. Punishment is also a form of the honour killing as it seems that if the subject is breaking the traditional or religious bondage of some community or race he/she is murdered by her own family or community members in real or fabricated accusation against her. This killing is not considered as crime but highlighted as punishment and is appreciated for the restoration of so called honour of the race or community. These types of brutal crimes act as message to the coming generation of that community and are accepted by the community member's .a common consideration is developed that the victim got the punishment for his/her misconduct.

- **Ethnicity based**

Caste has been remained the most important factor in governing the lives of many people in some parts of India. In India the huge numbers of honour killings took place or recorded were happened because of inter-caste marriages only. The communities do not allow this type of practice causing elopements and then killings. In most cases the groom or the bride has been killed for marrying someone from other caste. India's social system is framed on a caste hierarchy but over the year's people living in the cities to some extent have come out of the rigid caste system but in the under developed areas the problem is still breathing.

- **Traditional**

Traditional honour is a deep rooted traditional notion. It occurs in the name of **Kala Kali, Kara Kari, Siya Kari and Taurtoora** in some countries. It was a punishment for disobedience and illicit relations which defiles the family honour (Warraich 2005) this tradition was observed at its best at the time of partition of India from 1947 to 1950 when large no. Of women killed for the preservation of the family honour. At that time region and religion sentiments were at higher level hence this massacre occurred. It was the beginning of

this practice. Religious politics and greed for honour started this tradition and still it is prevalent in our social system. Races received it in their heritage from their ancestors and for the absurd honour or pride this tradition is still nurtured by us.

- **Result of Misunderstood Religious Thoughts**

Honour killing seems the result of the misunderstood religious thoughts. Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism favour chastity, fidelity, heterosexuality, and obedience, the same values perpetrators of honour killings try to enforce. But at the

Same time religion does not promote the punishment like death where the religious thoughts are misunderstood and considered as to punish the subject with death if he/she does not follow the religious codes. The perpetrators know the Do's and follow them with rigidity as written in their religion but never thought about the don'ts given by the same religion, thus leading to the murders in confusion.

- **Duality in Purpose**

Also there seems dual purpose behind the honour killing act, as now a days the ratio of the education and employment among women is increasing and they are also executing the responsibility of their families maintaining the family status very successfully thus creating a sense of losing dominant control over the family and community among the male race is a motivating factor for these type of killings. Through honour killing the perpetrators get rid of the victim and secondly try to become hero or saviour of the religious codes.

- **Discriminative/Biased**

Usually it is a matter of common observation that most of the times the female race is the chief target of these types of reported cases. In our society woman has to follow certain lines to move in the society, although the modern age has transformed the life style of the women in our society but major part of our population still lives under religious/race/male dominant society which do not allow the woman to flout the customary practices hurting the pride of their community or family. Cases demonstrate that, most often, honour killing is used to regulate the behavior of women, rather than men. Honour killing is based on the belief of woman as object and commodity, not as human being living with rights. Women's bodies are considered the repositories of family honour. "Honour" killings occur where women are viewed as responsible for upholding a family's "honour." In these societies the woman has assigned the most delicate and controversial responsibility which the male member cannot even dream of execute.

### **Causes: -**

There are so many causes which motivate this brutal practice these are: -

- Poorly Approached Formal Governance.
- Elopements
- Love Affair/ Marriages.
- Pre-Marital or Extra Marital Relations.
- Growing Status of the Women in Society.
- Inter-Caste Marriage.
- Want of Divorce.
- Pride of the Family/ Community/Race/Dynasty/Religion.
- Shame.
- Traditional.
- Social Stigma.
- Homosexuality.
- Popularity.
- Weak Psychological Development.
- Unacceptable Dress Code.
- Informal Courts (Khap Panchyats).

### **Results**

- **Poor psychological growth of the siblings**

The other family members of that family in which this miss-happening took place, unable to forget the that metal pressure and bitter experience throughout their life, this adversely affect the mental growth of the siblings in that family.

- **Loss of confidence and decisive power among the siblings**

The siblings of that family lose their confidence for ever and unable to take decisions in their lives. This makes them leading a life under the influence of that bloody act, fear rules the mind of these individual and sometimes result in mental ailment.

- **Hatred for the parents**

The children or some other family members develop an attitude of hatred for their parents or the members involved in that act of bloodshed. Throughout their life they do not forgive them and always keep their selves at a distance, leading to the communication gap and avoidance which promote some other social problems among them and in that case the

possibility of the want of love from the other source increases may result in the more of these happening in the future.

- **Dependency of the children on their parents**

In contrary to the above discussed result sometimes a child under the fear of that dreadful act he/she develops his self totally dependent over his parents. In this case he left leading his own life but live a borrowed life leading to some mental sickness.

- **Increase in the tendency of the suicides**

Suicides attempts can be observed very commonly in such type of cases. These can be pressurized suicide attempts or self motivated suicide attempts. After facing an enforced act upon her it becomes difficult for a girl to move in the society. Also a feeling of guilt and shame does not helps living the victim and her family member calmly thus leading to pressurized suicide attempts or self motivated suicide attempts.

- **Discrimination/inequality for male and female child**

These cases are also responsible for inculcating the psychology of discrimination between male and female child. The born female child suffers from the inequality or discriminating attitude of her parents. This also promotes the chances of the sex determination before the birth of a child and female feticides. This is also one of the faces of the honour killing.

### **Preventive Measures**

- ❖ With no time new strict law as announced by the Government should 'be implemented to keep a check on this malpractice of Killings at every level of the society.
- ❖ States should interfere seriously in this matter to prevent Honour Killings.
- ❖ The State and the Central Government need to work for making the public aware of the laws formulated for controlling this crime in the name of honour.
- ❖ 24 hours help lines numbers and special police protection cells easily approachable should be setup to help general public in danger.
- ❖ Fast track courts can be very helpful for these types of cases.
- ❖ By leaving slow and confused working style the central Govt, think of his duties to protect the rights of citizens.
- ❖ Police should actively participate in this entire scene.
- ❖ People belong to the affected area should be imparted education to give up from the narrow, rigid and conservative religious thoughts.

- ❖ The last but the most important is the interference of the local community which can help in removing this crime from the very base of our society.

### **Conclusion: -**

Form the above discussion this can be concluded that honour killings is not a new concept but after getting this specific name 'Honour Killing' it becomes familiar among the people throughout the world. In the primitive years it was not known by some easy and understandable names, also the recent development of the media has highlighted this hidden form of crime which might not have faced the justice and punishment. But now the face of this heinous crime has been exposed and very soon strict law will eradicate this shame from our society. Religion and culture cannot be the excuses for the honour killing drive, no religion or culture favour this type of cruelty, thus these killings should be condemned.

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