

A Comprehensive Analysis of Honor Killing Practices in Pakistan: Contributing Factors, Legal Frameworks, and Intervention Strategies

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Abstract

Research Objective: This study examines women's rights and honor killings in Pakistan, focusing on factors causing gender-based violence, especially the Karo-Kari practice in Sindh culture.

Research Method: The research uses qualitative analysis through literature review and secondary data from academic journals, legal documents, news reports, and human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. It applies purposive sampling and thematic analysis with data triangulation for accuracy. **Results:** The study identifies interconnected factors driving honor killings: patriarchal families, arranged marriages, property disputes, poor education, religious misinterpretations, poverty, rigid social structures, and weak law enforcement.

Findings and Implications: Honor killings involve both cultural and economic motives, particularly property consolidation. Poor education allows distorted religious justifications. Gender subordination creates violence-supporting ideologies. Despite legal improvements like the 2016 Act removing family forgiveness options, enforcement remains weak due to corruption and inadequate investigations. **Conclusion:** Honor killing is complex, requiring comprehensive intervention addressing cultural, economic, educational, and institutional factors together. Prevention needs coordinated legal reform, education, economic development, and cultural change programs. **Contribution:** This research connects historical legal changes to current honor-based violence, showing links between economic hardship and gender violence while highlighting NGO roles in prevention. **Limitations and Suggestions:** The study relies only on secondary data. Future research should include interviews with survivors, families, and community leaders. Longitudinal studies evaluating intervention effectiveness and comparative analysis across Pakistani provinces would improve understanding and create better prevention strategies.

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Introduction

This social issue has emerged as a significant concern throughout human history. Women have been compelled to confront a troubling perception of the opposite sex. In cultures such as those of the Greeks, Romans, and Persians, women have frequently been objectified to fulfill male desires, especially following their gender transitions and the pursuit of various forms of entertainment. Sadly, women have suffered from a lack of fundamental freedoms necessary for independence and the ability to make their own choices.¹ To ensure a fair election, it is advisable to divide the chamber into four equal parts.

Many prominent philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes, are regarded as the founders of their respective disciplines. They dedicated themselves to enhancing political discourse by proposing a range of political theories. In contrast, Rousseau contended that women are unfit to lead nations or serve as heads of state. Moreover, the perspective advanced by Sati, which views women as akin to animals and denies them the right to live beyond death, undermines women's fundamental rights in societies like India, where these rights are often disregarded.²

There is strong evidence that in the early days of Islam, horrific acts were considered. In this aspect, the teachings of the Qur'an are therefore exceptional. According to the Quran, those who accuse a virgin of adultery are subject to the Qazaf standard. To avoid being labeled a liar and earning an eighty-stripe sentence, the individual who implicated the girl must present four witnesses for their testimony to be accepted. The adulterer/adulteress will be found guilty in this tribunal since he did not confirm his statement.³

Due to the sharp decline in socioeconomic growth and the influence of tribal and feudal social systems on women's lives, it is challenging to determine the number of women in Pakistan. Women's rights in Pakistan are steadily advancing, as evidenced by the increasing literacy rate among females. The issue of violence against women is highlighted by civil society and the spiritual economy. According to the All-Pakistani Council of Scholars, Islamic law prohibits killing, the country's largest organization of secular clerics. With the backing of advocates for girls' rights, courts in some areas of the country have accepted the appeal and imposed harsher punishments for violent crimes against women. Pakistan's constitutional preamble promotes democratic ideas and guarantees the basic rights of all Pakistani citizens. The 1947 order guaranteed women the

¹ Hsiu-Lan Cheng and Helen, and Youngju Kim, "Racial and Sexual Objectification of Asian American Women: Associations with Trauma Symptomatology, Body Image Concerns, and Disordered Eating," *Women & Therapy* 41, no. 3-4 (October 2, 2018): 237-60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2018.1425027>; Erika R Carr, Green Brandeis, and Allison N and Ponce, "Women and the Experience of Serious Mental Illness and Sexual Objectification: Multicultural Feminist Theoretical Frameworks and Therapy Recommendations," *Women & Therapy* 38, no. 1-2 (April 3, 2015): 53-76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2014.978216>; Eric D. Wesselmann et al., "The Effects of Sexual Harassment, Assault, and Objectification on the Self," *Self and Identity* 20, no. 7 (2021): 841-44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2021.1882551>.

² Penny A Weiss, "Rousseau, Antifeminism, and Woman's Nature," *Political Theory* 15, no. 1 (June 1, 1987): 81-98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/191721>; Suzanne A. Blunn, "Sati and Its Abolition in British Social and Political Discourses c. 1832 - 1895" (Birkbeck, University of London, 2020).

³ Abdel Salam Sidahmed, "Problems in Contemporary Applications of Islamic Criminal Sanctions: The Penalty for Adultery in Relation to Women," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 2 (November 1, 2001): 187-204, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190120083077>; Md. Sirajul Islam, "Al-Qadhaf and Its Punishment in Islamic Criminal Law," *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)* 10, no. 2 (2020): p98111, <https://doi.org/10.29322/ijsrp.10.02.2020.p98111>; Meraj Ahmad Meraj, "The Concept of Crime and Punishment in Islam," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research* 4, no. 5 (2018): 27-34.



ability to vote in Pakistan, reaffirmed by a provisional charter in the 1956 national elections.⁴

A complete study of the practical features of debt rights in contemporary Pakistani society reveals that they are being flagrantly abused. In this regard, there are those who knowingly or unknowingly violate Islamic beliefs and regulations. Since Pakistan is an Islamic Republic of Pakistan, every rule and regulation is based on Islamic law. On the other hand, certain traditions and customs contradict the generally applicable Islamic legal norms. In Pakistan, girls are not permitted to exercise their civil liberties when incarcerated, despite being protected by law and guaranteed by Islam. Pakistan is a Muslim nation; however, when it comes to women's rights, customs and cultural norms predominate above Islamic law. When there is an alternative court system, such as the Jirga or the Panchayat, women and their complaints are rarely considered; hence, prisons and religious promises and measures are not a normal part of daily life.⁵

A culture of fear makes it impossible for women to advocate for their rights. These organizations inflict unjust punishment on men and women who claim their gender rights in opposition to long-established tribal or community norms. The violence of the surrounding community obscures the religion of peace and equality, Islam. The country's society and legal system have accepted murder in the name of honor as an acceptable social evil and a valid defense against murder. In 2012, 913 women and girls were killed in the name of honor. In recent years, the parents' limbs have grown significantly longer.⁶ Human Rights Campaign reports that I killed about 675 women and girls between January and September 2011. In 2010, the fee had 791 reported killings.⁷ In 2004, in response to the insufficient representation of women in parish societies, a number of legal changes were implemented thanks to the efforts of women human rights activists, religious leaders, and women active in political parties.⁸

⁴ Mara Malagodi, "Dominion Status and the Origins of Authoritarian Constitutionalism in Pakistan," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 17, no. 4 (December 31, 2019): 1235–57, <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/moz080>.

⁵ Malagodi; Mingyue (Michelle) Gu, "A Complex Interplay between Religion, Gender and Marginalization: Pakistani Schoolgirls in Hong Kong," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 11 (September 2, 2015): 1934–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.941895>; Hira Alvi Khokhar, Tabinda Rani, and Fawad Hussain, "Impacts of Gender Disparity and Socio-Educational Structure on Legal Awareness of Women Inmates: A Case Study of Prisons in Sindh, Pakistan," *Global Regional Review* IX, no. III (October 7, 2024): 131–41, [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024\(IX-III\).13](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-III).13).

⁶ Deler Singh and Dipali S. Bhandari, "Legacy of Honor and Violence: An Analysis of Factors Responsible for Honor Killings in Afghanistan, Canada, India, and Pakistan as Discussed in Selected Documentaries on Real Cases," *Sage Open* 11, no. 2 (April 24, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211022323>.

⁷ Rashida Abbas, Fazal Elahi Bilal, and Muhammad Akif Rashid, "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN PAKISTAN: TO WHAT EXTENT PAKISTAN FULFILLED ITS INTERNATIONAL PLEDGE," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research* 04, no. 01 (March 31, 2022): 575–82, <https://doi.org/10.52567/pjsr.v4i1.923>; Pasand Khoso, "Violence Against Women in Pakistan: Analysis of Print Media Reports during the Years of 2015 and 2016 in Sindh Province of Pakistan," *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 5, no. I (March 15, 2021): 250–64, [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2021\(5-I\)20](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2021(5-I)20).

⁸ Masood Ahmed Riaz and Humera Naz, "An Analysis of Women Laws in Pakistan Theory and Practice," *Bulletin of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 4 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.48112/bms.v1i4.961>; Prof. Dr. Jawed Aziz Masudi Abdul Saboor, "INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ENACTMENTS (2000-2015) IN PAKISTAN," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 6, no. 2 (June 10, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v6i2.775>; Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak and Akhtar Hussain, "Women Representation in Pakistani Legislatures," *South Asian Survey* 20, no. 2 (September 3, 2013): 191–205, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971523116679785>; Abeeda Qureshi and Sara Ahmad, "Reserved Seats for



Shahla Zia's initial efforts to address horrific crimes through parliamentary legislation have been significantly hampered by the Pakistan Penal Code, which represents a troubling setback for our concerns and feedback. Ultimately, the legislation was presented to the National Assembly with many of its most controversial provisions removed. While invoices were introduced as an option for consumers in December 2004, they became mandatory in January 2005. Nevertheless, recent data indicates that there have been no reported cases of honor killings.⁹

This research endeavors to undertake a comprehensive analysis of honor killings in Pakistan from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence. The primary goal is to assess whether such practices are in alignment with or in contradiction to the fundamental principles of Islam as delineated in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The study aims to provide scholarly clarification on the authentic Islamic stance regarding these practices, demonstrating through meticulous textual analysis that honor killings constitute violations of Islamic law and ethics, rather than being endorsed as religious mandates.

The investigation will identify and critically evaluate the principal sociocultural factors that contribute to the perpetuation of honor killings within Pakistani society, with a specific focus on distinguishing between genuine religious motivations and pre-Islamic cultural traditions. This analysis will examine how patriarchal social structures have historically influenced violence against women across various civilizations, while also exploring the correlation between the diminished social status of women in male-dominated societies and the prevalence of honor-based violence in the Pakistani context.

A significant component of this research will concentrate on assessing the extent to which Pakistani women have mobilized against honor killings, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts in effecting meaningful societal transformation. The study will analyze the role of women's rights discourse in challenging these practices and will investigate how advocacy movements have contributed to raising awareness and fostering change within the framework of Islamic feminist perspectives.

Furthermore, the research will thoroughly assess the existing legal mechanisms in Pakistan for addressing honor killings, determining the legislative reforms necessary to align national laws with authentic Islamic jurisprudence while ensuring comprehensive protection of women's rights. This evaluation will encompass a review of governmental responses to honor killings and women's rights violations, an assessment of the effectiveness of current policies, and the identification of critical areas that require improvement in both legal frameworks and policy implementation.

Finally, the study aims to formulate evidence-based intervention strategies that are culturally sensitive and align with religious authenticity, designed to prevent honor killings while respecting genuine Islamic values and the cultural context of Pakistan. Through a comprehensive literature review and gap analysis, this research will contribute to existing scholarship by proposing practical solutions that confront the root causes of honor-based violence, establishing how educational, social, and legal interventions can be effectively designed to eliminate this practice while preserving cultural and religious integrity.

Women in Pakistan: Reinforcement of Patriarchy and Powerlessness (2002–2018)," *Women's Studies International Forum* 94 (September 2022): 102629, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2022.102629>.

⁹ Qureshi and Ahmad, "Reserved Seats for Women in Pakistan: Reinforcement of Patriarchy and Powerlessness (2002–2018)"; Huda Fatima et al., "Pakistan Steps up to Remove 'Honour' from Honour Killing," *The Lancet Global Health* 5, no. 2 (February 2017): e145, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(16\)30359-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(16)30359-X); Ayesha Tanzeem, "Pakistan's Parliament Strengthens Honor Killing Law," *VOA, East Asia*, October 7, 2016; Ali Shahid, Malik Husnain Awan, and Farhana Aziz Rana, "Honour Killings in Pakistan: Legal Perspectives and Reforms," *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (March 30, 2024): 134–40, <https://doi.org/10.55737/qjss.547319279>.



Methods

This study utilized a qualitative research design and descriptive analysis to explore women's rights issues and the phenomenon of honor killings in Pakistan. The research methodology was grounded in an extensive literature review and the analysis of secondary data collected from diverse sources, including academic journals, legal documents, newspaper articles, and international human rights publications from organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Pakistan Human Rights Commission, as well as reports from the Pakistani Senate and National Assembly.

The research design employed purposive sampling techniques to identify pertinent secondary data specifically related to violence against women and honor killings within the Pakistani context. Data collection involved the systematic compilation of case studies documenting instances of honor killings and gender-based violence. Cases were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives and their potential to yield valuable insights into the investigated phenomenon.

For data analysis, the study adopted thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which facilitated the identification, interpretation, and reporting of patterns within the qualitative data. This methodological approach was chosen for its flexibility in accommodating various theoretical frameworks and its effectiveness in allowing for a detailed examination of complex social issues. The thematic analysis process involved systematically coding the selected case studies and reports, leading to the identification of recurring patterns and the development of themes that linked historical research findings with contemporary manifestations of honor-based violence.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing multiple source types, including academic literature, legal documents, media reports, and international monitoring reports. This multi-source approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the legal, social, and cultural dimensions of honor killings, thereby establishing a robust empirical foundation for the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Results and Discussions

Cultural Factors and Traditional Commitments Contributing to Honor Killing Practices

Karo-Kari, a practice within Sindhi culture, is a complex issue influenced by interconnected sociocultural factors that have increased gender-based violence throughout the Sindh province. This practice often results in deadly punishment for perceived disobedience, especially targeting women who resist arranged marriages or challenge patriarchal authority. Highlights that families are frequently responsible for these fatal outcomes. The practice also extends to the killing of wives who confront their husbands or in-laws. A significant factor driving these actions is property inheritance, where women's land ownership can lead to conflicts. Relatives may resort to honor-based killings when legal means of settling disputes fail, claiming moral justification to escape legal repercussions.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sujay Patel and Amin Muhammad Gadit, "Karo-Kari: A Form of Honour Killing in Pakistan," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 45, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 683–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461508100790>; Surryia Khanum, Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi, and Anila Hashim, "Thematic and Contextual Reflection of Women in 'Honour Unmasked' by Nafisa Shah," *Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (January 28, 2022): 24–29, <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2022.v06i01.004>; Nadeem Bhatti et al., "Domestic Violence against Women: A Case Study of District Jacobabad, Sindh Pakistan," *Asian Social Science* 7, no. 12 (November 29, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v7n12p146>; Najma Noor Phulpoto, AISHA BASHIR SHAH, and Faiz.M. Shaikh, "CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF KAR KARI



Marriage practices in Pakistani society, especially in rural areas, are largely governed by patriarchal family structures, where matrimonial decisions are often predetermined at birth or arranged through familial agreements.¹¹ The study identified that verbal commitments between families, typically involving promises made by brothers regarding the future marriages of their children, create binding social contracts that come into effect as the children reach adolescence. These traditional arrangements foster significant social pressure and can lead to honor-based violence when individuals attempt to deviate from established marital expectations. The cultural belief that engaging in romantic relationships outside of these arrangements constitutes a breach of family honor frequently results in fatal repercussions for those considered to have crossed social boundaries.¹²

Economic Motivations and Educational Deficits to Religious Misinterpretation

The investigation reveals that property ownership plays a key role in many instances of honor killing, particularly concerning women who inherit land or other valuable assets. The findings indicate that relatives may seek to acquire inherited property through both legitimate and illegitimate means, with honor killing serving as a method to eliminate property claims when other avenues prove ineffective. This economic dimension implies that the practice transcends conventional notions of honor, encompassing material considerations, whereby accusations of dishonor offer a socially acceptable rationale for the removal of inheritance rights and the consolidation of family wealth.¹³

Study demonstrates that insufficient education, particularly in rural areas with limited access to formal schooling, significantly contributes to the perpetuation of honor-killing practices. The analysis reveals that inadequate religious education among community leaders, especially mosque imams lacking proper theological training, leads to the misinterpretation and

A CASE STUDY OF JACOBABAD- SINDH-PAKISTAN," *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research* 02, no. 01 (August 13, 2012): 70–72, <https://doi.org/10.52283/NSWRCA.AJBMR.20120201A10>.

¹¹ Amrina Khan and Asim Iqbal, "Child Marriage in the Light of Objectives of Shari'ah and Islamic Jurisprudence (An Analytical Study of Prevalent Practices in Pakistani Society)," *International Journal of Social Science & Entrepreneurship* 2, no. 2 (September 15, 2022): 520–31, <https://doi.org/10.58661/ijss.v2i2.98>; Zara Ahmed, "Evolution of Pakistani Marriages," *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth / Le Journal Canadien de Famille et de La Jeunesse* 14, no. 2 (January 1, 2022): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy29760>.

¹² Amiya Bhatia et al., "Honor, Violence, and Children: A Systematic Scoping Review of Global Evidence," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 151 (May 2024): 106642, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106642>; Olympia L.K. Campbell et al., "Genetic Markers of Cousin Marriage and Honour Cultures," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 45, no. 6 (November 2024): 106636, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2024.106636>; Mohammad Mazher Idriss, "Abused by the Patriarchy: Male Victims, Masculinity, 'Honor'-Based Abuse and Forced Marriages," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 13–14 (July 25, 2022): NP11905–32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260521997928>; Joseph A. Vandello and Dov Cohen, "Male Honor and Female Fidelity: Implicit Cultural Scripts That Perpetuate Domestic Violence," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 5 (May 2003): 997–1010, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.5.997>.

¹³ Ahmad Talha et al., "Judicial Inefficacies and Legal Inconsistencies in Addressing Honour Killings: A Human Rights Analysis of Pakistan's Legal Framework," *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, October 28, 2024, 2931–41, <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2024.v12i4.2438>; Shahid, Awan, and Rana, "Honour Killings in Pakistan: Legal Perspectives and Reforms"; Salma Nawaz et al., "The Role of Safety Management to Analyze the Current Situation of Honour Killing in Pakistan," *Journal of Public Value and Administrative Insight* 5, no. 2 (June 26, 2022): 424–39, <https://doi.org/10.31580/jpvai.v5i2.2517>; Pernilla Ouis, Annika Staaf, and Hanna Cinthio, "That's How We Were Raised," *Nordic Journal on Law and Society* 5, no. 01 (February 25, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.36368/njolas.v5i01.191>.

misrepresentation of Islamic teachings related to honor and violence. This educational deficit fosters an environment in which distorted religious justifications for honor killing can proliferate without appropriate scholarly correction or theological scrutiny.¹⁴

Socioeconomic Pressures and Social Immobility

Extreme poverty and the inability to satisfy basic needs create conditions in which honor killings may be utilized as a mechanism to address economic desperation. The study suggests that individuals may falsely accuse family members of moral transgressions to rationalize their elimination when financial pressures become insurmountable. This represents a particularly disturbing intersection of economic hardship and gender-based violence, where vulnerable family members become targets under the pretext of honor preservation.¹⁵

Analysis reveals that rural Sindhi society upholds rigid kinship structures that impede individuals from transcending traditional caste and tribal loyalties. These social constraints engender situations in which family members feel compelled to commit honor killings to sustain their status within established social hierarchies. The inability to achieve social mobility or sever ties with traditional obligations perpetuates cycles of violence that ensnare individuals within systems demanding adherence to honor-based codes, irrespective of personal convictions.¹⁶

Governmental Response, Patriarchal Systems, and Gender Subordination

Corroborated by reports from Amnesty International, these illustrate significant governmental failures in the prevention of honor killings and the protection of vulnerable populations. The research indicates that inadequate investigative procedures, corruption within law enforcement agencies, and lenient treatment of perpetrators contribute to the continued prevalence of these crimes. The institutional weaknesses identified in the analysis suggest that honor killings persist, in part, due to systemic failures that create an atmosphere of impunity for the offenders.¹⁷

¹⁴ Fariha Bibi Dr. Arshad Khan Bangash, "HONOUR KILLING: ILLITERACY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF WOMEN SUBORDINATION IN TRIBAL AREAS OF PAKISTAN," *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 2 (March 25, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjer.v3i2.44>; Hamida Bibi, Yunas Khan, and Tabinda Rani, "Honour Crime; Factors and Challenges: A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtunkwa Province Pakistan," *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology* 10 (December 31, 2021): 1746–53, <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2021.10.197>.

¹⁵ Andrew Gibbs et al., "Factors Associated with 'Honour Killing' in Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Two Cross-Sectional Studies," ed. Soraya Seedat, *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 8 (August 8, 2019): e0219125, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219125>; Pahor WA, Guraamani AH, and Khan Pahore D, "Gender Inequality Causes and Impacts on Honor Killing: A Case Study of District Shikarpur, Sindh, Pakistan," *Arts and Social Sciences Journal* 07, no. 06 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.4172/2151-6200.1000229>; Abdul Hadi, "'Honor' Killings in Misogynistic Society: A Feminist Perspective," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 9, no. 3 (May 10, 2020): 29, <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2020-0039>; Nootash Keyhani, "HONOUR CRIMES AS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE UK: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT," *Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.2052-1871.010>.

¹⁶ Ghulam Hussain, "Ethno-Nationality of Caste in Pakistan: Privileged Caste Morality in Sindhi Progressive Literature and Politics," *Critical Sociology* 48, no. 1 (January 21, 2022): 127–49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520964541>; Abdul Qadar and Arslan Waheed, "From Sainthood to Saintly Kinship: How Claiming Saintly Kinship Is Structuring the Social and Patronage Relationships in Rural Punjab, Pakistan," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 59, no. 1 (February 12, 2024): 69–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221097720>.

¹⁷ Shagufta Kanwal, "Honor Killing: A Case Study of Pakistan," *Journal of Law & Social Studies* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 38–43, <https://doi.org/10.52279/jlss.03.01.3843>; Rafia Naz Ali, "Honour, Custom or



The patriarchal structures, originating from the Greek term "patriarch," meaning "father rule," fundamentally influence social relationships in ways that subordinate women to male authority. The findings suggest that in patriarchal societies, men dominate all significant social roles, relegating women to submissive positions and rendering them vulnerable to honor-based violence. This systemic gender subordination establishes an ideological foundation that not only justifies but also perpetuates the practice of honor killings.¹⁸

International Legal Framework and Domestic Implementation

A review of international legal standards highlights that honor killing constitutes a violation of several international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). Despite Pakistan's commitments under these international frameworks, substantial gaps exist between these obligations and domestic implementation.¹⁹

An examination of Pakistan's legal history reveals that the country inherited the Indian Penal Code from the British colonial administration, which includes provisions relevant to honor killing under sections 299-304 and 307-308. However, enforcement remains problematic. While Pakistan's Constitution (1973) guarantees equal rights and protection for women in Articles 25, 37, and 57, these constitutional provisions have not been effectively translated into practical protections against honor killings. Notably, specific legislation addressing honor killing was enacted only in 2004 under military ruler Pervez Musharraf, underscoring a prolonged period of legal inadequacy in confronting this form of gender-based violence. These findings collectively illustrate that honor killing is a multifaceted issue requiring comprehensive intervention strategies that simultaneously address cultural, economic, educational, and institutional factors. The complexity of these contributing elements indicates that effective prevention must involve coordinated efforts across various sectors, including legal reform, educational initiatives, economic development, and cultural transformation programs.²⁰

Distinct yet complementary roles for various categories of non-governmental organizations in establishing sustainable prevention capacity. Local NGOs prove particularly effective in delivering grassroots training programs due to their strong community ties, while international NGOs offer broader human rights advocacy and raise global awareness of systemic issues. This multi-tiered organizational approach guarantees comprehensive coverage, extending from community-level interventions to international advocacy, thereby ensuring local relevance

Crime: Honour Killing in Pakistan," *Journal of Regional Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (December 30, 2024): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.62843/jrsr/2024.3a014>; Dr. Bahadar Ali, Mr. Arshad Nawaz, Ms. Parveen Gul, "HONOUR KILLINGS ON THE TOUCHSTONE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 6, no. 2 (June 20, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v6i2.773>.

¹⁸ ,Mr. Arshad Nawaz, Ms. Parveen Gul, "HONOUR KILLINGS ON THE TOUCHSTONE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE."

¹⁹ Idriss, "Abused by the Patriarchy: Male Victims, Masculinity, 'Honor'-Based Abuse and Forced Marriages"; Vandello and Cohen, "Male Honor and Female Fidelity: Implicit Cultural Scripts That Perpetuate Domestic Violence."

²⁰ Robert Paul Churchill, *Providing Protection and Leveraged Reform*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190468569.003.0007>; Kanwal, "Honor Killing: A Case Study of Pakistan"; Shahid, Awan, and Rana, "Honour Killings in Pakistan: Legal Perspectives and Reforms."

alongside global support for prevention initiatives.²¹

Integrated Educational, Awareness Strategies, and Leadership Engagement

Ignorance represents a significant barrier to the prevention of honor-based violence, underscoring the necessity for comprehensive educational interventions across diverse channels. Social awareness programs, media campaigns, and community education initiatives must collaborate to maximize their collective impact. The investigation reveals that both print and electronic media platforms are effective tools for disseminating prevention messages to broad populations. Furthermore, community-based educational efforts conducted through religious services, social gatherings, and family reunions provide opportunities for direct engagement that minimize resistance.²²

Prioritizing legal literacy and understanding of family law in educational interventions as mechanisms for safeguarding women's rights. This multifaceted approach leverages existing social structures rather than imposing external frameworks, thereby ensuring enhanced community acceptance and the sustainability of prevention efforts. Effective prevention necessitates coordinated engagement from religious authorities, tribal leaders, and governmental institutions. Religious leaders possess unique moral authority that can counter discriminatory attitudes towards women and address theological misconceptions that erroneously justify honor killings. Concurrently, traditional tribal leaders (vaderos) must be held legally accountable for incidents of honor killings within their jurisdictions, transforming them from passive observers into proactive agents of prevention.²³

Government intervention is equally critical, particularly concerning poverty as a key contributing factor to criminal activity in the Sindh province. The research suggests that effective legislation requires comprehensive police reform, including enhanced training programs, increased representation of women in law enforcement, and the strengthening of local organizations to ensure adequate citizen protection and enforcement of constitutional rights.²⁴

The table below summarizes the evolution and limitations of Pakistani anti-honor killing legislation:

²¹ Ayesha Nazuk and Javid Shabbir, "A New Disclosure Index for Non-Governmental Organizations," ed. Massimo Marchiori, *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 2 (February 21, 2018): e0191337, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0191337>; Rafeel Wasif, "Does the Media's Anti-Western Bias Affect Its Portrayal of NGOs in the Muslim World? Assessing Newspapers in Pakistan," *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 31, no. 6 (December 29, 2020): 1343-58, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00242-5>.

²² Wasif, "Does the Media's Anti-Western Bias Affect Its Portrayal of NGOs in the Muslim World? Assessing Newspapers in Pakistan."

²³ Salma Nawaz et al., "The Role of Safety Management to Analyze the Current Situation of Honour Killing in Pakistan"; Arshad Khan Bangash, Syed Imran Haider, and Fariha Bibi, "Role of Tribal Family Institutions in the Promotion of Honour Killing," *Global Social Sciences Review* IV, no. II (June 30, 2019): 276-82, [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2019\(IV-II\).36](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2019(IV-II).36); Patel and Gadit, "Karo-Kari: A Form of Honour Killing in Pakistan."

²⁴ Patel and Gadit, "Karo-Kari: A Form of Honour Killing in Pakistan."



Table 1: Evolution and Limitations of Pakistani Anti-Honor Killing Legislation

Legislation/Period	Key Provisions	Effectiveness/Limitations
British Colonial Law (1860 Penal Code)	Lenient sentence for murder with "grave and sudden provocation."	Provided a legal basis for later leniency; still cited by judges despite subsequent reforms, demonstrating persistent influence.
Federal Shariat Court Reform (1990)	Declared that provocation does not lessen the intensity of murder, aligning with Sharia.	Despite this ruling, lenient sentences continued to be handed down by some judges, indicating a gap in judicial adherence.
Law of December 8, 2004	Increased punishment for honor killings (7 years imprisonment to the death penalty in extreme cases).	Did not outlaw the practice of allowing murderers to buy their freedom by paying compensation/pardoning, creating a significant loophole.
Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act of 2006 (The Women's Protection Bill)	Punished compelled marriage, expanded rape definition, restricted zina prosecution.	Did not directly address honor killing itself, and doubts about its overall effectiveness remained.
Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Act of 2011	Created punishment for compelling a woman to marry for any reason, including to prevent criminal liability or settle civil disputes.	Addressed a specific contributing factor, but was not a comprehensive solution for honor killings.
The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act of 2016	Specifically repealed the loophole allowing perpetrators to avoid punishment through forgiveness from family members; established punishment of 14 years imprisonment to life in prison for honor crimes.	Represented a major legal improvement, but honor killings have continued; challenges in enforcement and persistent impunity remain.

Conclusion

Honor killings are not simply cultural expressions; they epitomize a systematic subordination of women, reinforced by patriarchal structures. Economic motivations, especially concerning property inheritance, often masquerade as efforts to preserve honor, indicating that material concerns significantly drive these violent acts. The examination of honor killing practices, particularly the Karo-Kari tradition within Sindhi culture, reveals a complex social issue that extends beyond mere cultural explanations. Honor-based violence arises from a combination of cultural, economic, educational, legal, and institutional factors that perpetuate gender-based violence in the Sindh province of Pakistan.

Deficiencies in education, particularly in rural areas, contribute to environments where distorted interpretations of religious teachings thrive. This allows community leaders to



misrepresent Islamic principles and normalize honor-based violence. Despite legal advancements, such as the 2016 Criminal Law Amendment Act, enforcement challenges and systemic corruption foster an atmosphere of impunity for perpetrators. Socioeconomic pressures, including extreme poverty and rigid social hierarchies, further rationalize honor killings as responses to economic desperation or the maintenance of social status. This underscores the intersection of economic hardship and gender-based violence, where vulnerable family members become targets under the guise of preserving honor.

Effective prevention necessitates coordinated interventions that address multiple factors, including legal reform, education, economic development, and cultural change. Both local and international non-governmental organizations play critical roles in establishing sustainable prevention initiatives. Engaging religious authorities and tribal leaders is vital for achieving meaningful change, as they can challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote legal accountability. Honor killing is a fundamental violation of human rights that requires immediate action. A comprehensive approach is essential to transforming the social, economic, educational, and institutional structures that enable such practices, ultimately striving toward the elimination of honor-based violence and the safeguarding of vulnerable citizens, particularly women.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Sahibzada Muhammad Wasim Jan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing -original Draft, Writing - review & editing, review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability

Data will be made available on request.

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