

## Socio-Cultural Causes of Kala Kali (Honour Killing): A Case of Tehsil Jam Pur



Saima Afzal	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.
Hammad Raza	Lecturer (Visiting), Institute of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: <a href="mailto:hammadext@gmail.com">hammadext@gmail.com</a>
Adeela Manzoor	PhD Scholar, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

**Abstract:** Pakistani rural people have to face many problems under the umbrella of tribal laws and customs. These cultural norms and tribal laws compel the people to kill their wives, sisters, mothers and daughters in the name of so-called "honour". The major objectives of the study were to explore the socio-cultural causes of kala kali (honor killing) and to see the impacts of kala kali on victim's family. The cases of fourteen victims were studied where the members of victim's family were informants as victims themselves were not available. The result of the present study shows that the lust for money, feudalism, illiteracy and lack of awareness about human rights are the causes of kala kali. It can be reduced by increasing awareness and education. Government should launch some policies like a comprehensive legal awareness program to make people aware of their legal rights.

**Key Words:** Honor Killing, Role of Sardar, Fake Honor Killings, Disrespecting the Respect

### Introduction

'Honor killing is an extreme act in which a family or community end up murdering a woman in the name of honor. However, the idea of "honour" is only used as a motive for domestic abuse in relation to ethnic and religious groups (Metoo & Mirza, 2007). Such immoral conduct could take the form of supposed marital unfaithfulness, the rejection of arranged marriage, a marriage claim, a divorce, fair table conduct, and rape. A series of so-called "honor killings" again highlighted Pakistan, and the country is being accused of violent characteristics in the minds of many external people (Fatima and Qadir, 2017). Every week in Pakistan, killings in the name of honor are highlighted in media and many sisters, wives and daughters are dishonored. Often a single individual is responsible; a group of men's families also participate (Hongdao et al., 2018).

The horrific murders were instantly misconstrued as violent acts of religious bigotry alongside news reports on terrorist attacks and the rhetoric of the political clergy (Fatima and Qadir, 2017). The worst of such customs is called "black ritual" in English, "tor tora" in Khebar Pakhtonkha,

"karo kari" in Sindh, "Siyahkari" in Baluchistan, and "kala kali" in Punjab (Gah, 2001). A close relative, father, brother, son, or a wife's husband commit most cases of honor killings. The victim's family can forgive the case when it reaches a court of law (who may well be one of them). In this way murderer sets free and no deterrence is created. to prevent such crimes in future (Ahmad, 2019).

There are no opportunities for women to resolve potential misunderstandings (Ruane, 2000). There is no suitable social solution for family members but the stain is eliminated by targeting the female (Amnesty International, 2001). Using the term "honor killing" in itself is misleading. This crime is dishonorable in itself. This name is chosen just to justify the acts of the offender, and community at a larger level (Prochazka, 2011). In this context, honor crimes essentially excuse male and community-based violence and primarily domestic violence. Kalis (female labelled kali for her action of intimacy with another male) remain dishonored even after death. The man who kills for noble motives becomes a "honourable" man, and his kinsmen support him morally and legally. If he doesn't

kill his wife, sister or daughter, then he is known as “begairat” (a person who has no honor) ([Fatima and Qadir, 2017](#)). The kala (male alleged of adultery or affair in such cases) has to pay compensation to save his life. Such compensations include the transfer of a female, land or money.

Mostly kala-kali occurs in rural areas as compared to urban areas because urban people are educated and aware ([Huda and Kamal, 2020](#)). The UN reports that each year in the name of 'honor', 5000 women are killed ([UNFPA, 2000](#)). Honour killings have been reported in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda and the United Kingdom. Hundreds of women of all ages are recorded killed every year in Pakistan in the name of honor. Many additional reports are not documented. Nearly every case goes unpunished ([Amnesty International, 2001](#)).

Pakistan is a participant of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and legally bound to act in accordance with its article. The article encrypts, “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”. And “No one will be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. But the state seems a complete failure with respect to implementing these articles in their true meanings and punishing the criminals of such offences. In such cases, police do not register the FIR. Human Right Groups have accused local authorities of covering up the killing ([Terman, 2010](#)).

Honor violations are activities before Islam. These are not embedded in any religious teachings or beliefs; rather, these are mere reflections of religious fundamentalism where women are the primary sufferers ([Ali and Gavino, 2008](#)). Kala-Kali has no Islamic justification, contrary to popular belief. Religion is simply used as an excuse for honour killing ([Anderson et al., 2010](#)). The men are advised to treat women with justice in the following verse of Quran where Allah states: “As for those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct admonish first, then refuse to share their beds, and then (as a final measure) beat them lightly. If they heed your call, then

do not treat them unjustly” (Q. 4: 34). Honor Killings of men and women are tribal practices not recognized by Islam. Mostly offenders offer Islamic legitimacy to these pre-Islamic norms ([Chesler, 2009](#)).

The effects of murdering honor are: hate in relatives of victims and retaliation, reduced access for women to educational, jobs and other social activities, basic human rights, reinforcing unwanted customs, humiliation and embarrassment in the families of victims, in particular, the children of victims ([Deol and Sandhu, 2020](#)). While honour killings are quite common in this part of the world, it really requires us to raise our credibility level to imagine that in many instances, couples that marry against clan norms are put to death by their own family and kinfolk. Not just that, these murderous acts take place in full view. People of the village know about it, neighbours are often part of the plot, and even distant clan members, who are scattered around, may be taken into confidence ([Gupta, 2010](#)).

## Objectives

The objectives of the present study are

1. To find out the socio-cultural causes of kala kali.
2. To find out effects of killing on victim’s family.
3. To find out Sardar’s role supporting in kala kali.

## Research Methodology

Keeping a view of the nature of the present study researcher used a qualitative research design. The universe for the study was Tehsil Jam Pur. The researcher could not directly interview the victim of kala kali because most victims had died, sold or run away. So the informants of this research were the families of kala kali. The sample of fourteen cases was selected through purposive sampling. The critical, descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data for the present research. For the sake of confidentiality, anonymity is maintained by giving case numbers to the cases instead of mentioning the names of victims.

## Results and Discussion

### Comparative Table of Cases

Case No.	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Monthly Income (Rs.)	Father Occupation	Reason Behind kala kali	Reaction after declare kala kali
1	Male	18	Single	Illiterate	6000	Agriculture	Choice of	Kala vanished,

2	Female	40	Married	Illiterate	5000	Agriculture	marriage Misperception	kali sold Kala give money & female, kali killed
3	Female	18	Single	Illiterate	5000	Shopkeeper	Choice of marriage	Both killed
4	Male	19	Single	Primary	10000	Agriculture	Choice of marriage	Kala give money & land, kali killed
5	Male	35	Married	Primary	9000	Agriculture, Milkman	Misperception	Kala killed, kali sold
6	Female	27	Divorce	Primary	8000	Electrician	Choice of marriage	Kala pay money, kali sold
7	Female	21	Married	Illiterate	5000	Agriculture	Choice of marriage	Kali killed
8	Female	35	Married	Illiterate	7000	Agriculture	Misperception	Kali killed
9	Male	22	Single	Middle	7000	Agriculture	Enmity	Kala killed, kali sold
10	Female	45	Married	Illiterate	6000	Agriculture	Un able to pay loan	Kala vanished, kali killed
11	Male	20	Single	Primary	6000	Agriculture and cycle mechanic	Misperception	Both killed
12	Female	23	Married	Illiterate	5000	Shepherd	Misperception	Kali killed
13	Female	20	Single	Illiterate	10000	Agriculture	Choice of marriage	Both killed
14	Male	38	Married	Illiterate	5000	Shepherd and Woodcutter	Misperception	Kala killed, kali sold

### Kala Kali in the Form of Choosing a Marriage Partner

Amnesty International (2001) noted that in a culture where most marriages are arranged by parents, expressing the wish to select a wife and marry a partner of his choice is regarded as significant acts of nonconformity. The honor of the family is damaged by such wishes. Often the parents accuse the daughters, who have married males, of their own decision, of being zina (rape charge). Victims of such tradition are of case no. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 13. They all wanted to marry with their own choice. In Case no 1, the victim (male) married with partner victim without the consent of her father. But her father put a charge of rape on him. He divorced her due to the pressure of the local Sardar (head of tribe) and police. He vanished from the area, and the partner victim was sold for Rs. 50,000. In case no 4, the victim (male) and partner victim wanted to marry. The uncle of the partner victim killed her. The victim paid Rs. 500,000 and gave five-acre agricultural land in order to save his life. In case 6, the victim (female) was sold in Rs. 200,000

by her family, and the partner victim that was labeled with her paid Rs. 300,000 to her family. The victims of case no.3 and 13 were killed with their partner victims by their brothers. In rural areas of Sindh and Punjab, girls are deprived of their marriage rights (Niaz and Hassan, 2006), while in many cases, young boys also do not participate in the decision of their marriages. Most of the times, marriage is considered as a matter of the parent's authority. None of the children has the right to violate this rule; otherwise, they have to face a social boycott.

### Kala Kali Due to Misunderstanding

Sometimes honour killing takes place due to misunderstanding. There is no opportunity for women to resolve perceived misinterpretations. To restore the honor, traditions suggest only one way, and that is the killing of women (Ruane, 2000). Such misunderstandings, in addition to the taunts of people, lead the family members to commit honor killing (Shah, 1998). Case no. 2,5, 8, 11, 12, and 14 are victims of misunderstanding. In case no.5 victim

(male) was killed by the brothers of the female partner. She was sold in Rs. 90,000 by her family. But victim (male) of case no.11 was killed along with partner victim (female) by her father and brother. Similarly, a victim of (male) was killed by the husband of female victim, and female was sold in Rs. 200,000 by her husband. In case no.2 the victim (female) was killed by her son. Kala that stigmatized with her paid money one hundred thousands and give a woman for marriage in order to spare his life. The female in case 8 was killed by her husband and husband's relative. But female in case 12 was killed by her brother in law.

## **Fake Honour Killings**

### **Kala Kali in the Form of Revenge**

In most cases, the murderers are free to only take revenge against an old woman in her family and give her kala kali color. (Kalhor 2002). Most women were innocently murdered because of their males' enmity with other tribes, castes, cultures or families at times, because of many horrible motives for their male egos (Palo, 2008). Jirgas and panchayats also charge a committee and play an important role in retaining their influence in this illegitimate justice system. The decisions pronounced by the men (they are always men) are frequently subjective, oppressive and strongly anti-women, such as women as a replacement, women in revenge, and women as bargaining chips and land. For example, brother of the partner victim (female) killed the victim of case no. 9 due to enmity and stigmatize the victim as Kala. After that he sold his sister in Rs. 100,000.

### **To un Pay Loans**

Incapable of repaying loans, some men kill women in their own families to include someone in the debtor's family to make sure that the loan is considered paid as compensation (Shah, 1998). The husband of female victim in case no. 10 was unable to repay loan of partner victim (male). So he killed his wife (female victim) and labeled male victim that he had extra marital relations with female victim. Thereafter male victim vanished from the area without taking his money.

### **Lust for Money**

Many men seem to have been inspired by the need for money to accuse their mothers, wives and female relatives of dishonoring and killing their families to get

compensation from the suspected kala who fled the killings (Shah, 1998). Now people use this kala kali for the economic resource. They take money and land from the alleged kala who escape the killing. But some corrupt people also sell kali woman to other families instead of killing and get money. The victim (female) of case no. 6 was sold by her family and alleged kala paid money for reconciliation. In most of the cases under study, lust for money was involved. Now it has almost become a business, where the landlord takes a commission to sell the woman or keep her at home and retains the right to sell her. He decides between two options. Either a huge amount of money is paid as "khoon baha" (blood money) or a women (chatti) is offered as "badal/aiwaz" (compensation) (Lari, 2011).

### **Sardar's Role**

Pakistan is a semi-feudal society, and feudal leaders remain very powerful; they define their own system of justice, lay down their own laws, in which the definition of honour is different from the formal laws. Different members of the community have made the role of landowners (zamindar/vaderas) jirgas and panchaits (council of elders in a village or community) very important and powerful. They are politically and socially powerful and have the traditional authority to deal problems and issues of their community. These systems are customarily used to ascertain the culpability of the proposed victim (Lari, 2011).

Death occurs in the name of honour (Jasam, 2001). In the law of Jirga, killing men and women in the name of honour is not considered as a crime (Nabi and Baloch, 2010). The leaders of Jirga and panchait (sardar) bear the burden of killing a number of men and women in the name of honor. None of the daughter or son of any leader is ever since this tradition is going on (Faqir and Atta, 2017). The role of Sardar (Chief) is of principal importance because it is the institution of Sardar that controls social life in the area. Now Sardar enjoys social, economic and political supremacy. Given these privileges, he is involved with the police to establish and maintain his role. All such matter is settled by the Sardars or panchayat of the area. No one can confront the decision taken by the Sardar or panchayat. In some cases, the kali woman is placed on the lodge of Sardar, and from there, she is sold.

### **Effects of Killing on Victim's Family**

Due to the kala kali whole society is affected. The

family of victim is also affected. One of the people is killed, and usually, that person is the bread earner of the family. So the economic system is also affected at the family level. A lot of money is spent on legal proceedings. Most often, police are also bribed to silently settle the dispute. Even in reconciliation lot of money has to be given in order to reach a settlement with a woman's family. So the entire income of life is spent in a single settlement.

### **Recommendations**

1. Regulatory actions should be taken by the Government to regulate all rituals and practices, for example, kala kali
2. The panchayat/Jirga system should be discouraged in Pakistan through legislative amendments.
3. The murder cases should also be proclaimed in the name of kala-kali as a felony and crime against the state and humanity. The killings should be seriously penalized in kala kali cases.
4. Simple process and procedural guidelines should be encouraged in particular for women in the process of FIR registration.
5. A systematic awareness program of legal literacy needs to be implemented to remind women of their legal rights. Several literacy campaigns must also be initiated in the form of conferences, lectures and local literature in both rural and urban areas in order to create awareness among the common people.
6. Women who are victims of kala kali should be provided with relief and assistance by the state.

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