

# THE DARK SIDE OF THE PICTURE: THE ROLE OF POVERTY IN THE PROMOTION OF HONOUR KILLING IN FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS (FATA) OF PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

*This article maps economic resources and its relationship with honour killing in Kurram Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. Using the criteria of sample size determination, 377 respondents out of 1612 were randomly selected in a proportionate manner. A conceptual framework consisting of one dependent variable (honour killing) and one independent variable (economic aspect) was developed. The data collected through an interview schedule, with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was analyzed and presented at Uni, Bi, and Multi-variate levels by using frequencies, percentage distribution and Chi-Square test statistics. The results disclosed that honour killing was not common among all classes, and that the members of the upper class were more conscious about the observance of honour norms as compared to lower ones. However, inheritance disputes, killing of women for beneficial benefits and killing for her share in parental property had no association with honour killing in the study universe. Moreover, the role of women in the economic resources of the family were also absent in the study area. From the results, we recommend that women should be given equal opportunities in all aspects of life, materials about women's rights and new legislation supporting those rights should be included in syllabi, and that awareness about women's legal rights of inheritance should be made in the wider society.*

## Key words

Turizuna, Maliks, Honour killing industry, Parachinar, Sadda, and Alizai.

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## Introduction

The concept of 'honour' contains a number of definitions: high esteem, respect, reverence, reputation, a good name, etc.<sup>1</sup> It is concerned with an individual's social prestige within society which are dependent upon collective communal views about a person<sup>2</sup>. In other words, honour means feelings of admiration or respect for someone based on communal rules or ethical principles that define honourable deeds within that community to run the system in a way that nobody could either break or abuse the trust<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, honour killing can be defined as a planned murder which is the result of either perceived or actual illegitimate sexual relationships or behaviours that compromise the honour of a family<sup>4</sup>. The offenders are usually targeted by their male family members<sup>5</sup> or their relatives for their denial of an arranged marriage, fallen victim to a sexual assault, demanding for divorce or for employment, or their involvement in extramarital relationships.<sup>6</sup>

The question of economic resources is associated with honour killing in various parts of the world. Economic deprivation theory contends that wealth multiplies power, status, and success while poverty or class disparities increase the rate of violent crimes<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, Becker<sup>8</sup> was the first to apply economic tools while analyzing crime, based on rational choice theory. This theory considers that the perpetrator of a crime is a rational person who assesses cost and benefits for the crime before committing the crime. Economic models for crime are generally utilized for supply and demand.<sup>9</sup>In such a framework, criminals supply crimes while the public demands protection from crimes and governmental agencies provide public protection. It is also used to illustrate how crime responds to a variety of socio-economic and demographic factors.

Araji<sup>10</sup> stated that the normative claims of honour are mixed up with socio-economic motives which are tied with social standing, mobility and economic opportunities. It is not only the concept of shame and honour that measure normative expectations only on behalf of women's behaviour, but at the same time class hierarchy and privileges also provide roots for honour crimes<sup>11</sup>. Murad, et.al.<sup>12</sup> linked the concept of honour with the reputation and social standing of the family within the community to preserve family honour and maintain social standing in the community. They further mixed the claim of honour with socio-economic motives and added that as the dishonoured man may not be able to find a job, will lose status, economic prosperity, and political stature.

Amnesty International<sup>13</sup> observed that in some cases, honour killings are committed for other sort of motives such as when the wife

brings lesser dowry and avoiding women's share in property and inheritance. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan<sup>14</sup> also supported the findings of Amnesty International's Report<sup>15</sup> by concluding that sometimes women are killed in the name of honour over inheritance rights and property disputes but termed as honour killing. Respectively, Brand<sup>16</sup> contended that in fact many cases of honour killing are the result of economic gains but it is termed as honour killing, committed against female family members with whom they are having disputes over rights of inheritance.

Furthermore, women in many societies are considered valuable commodities and have an exchange value. This is often fulfilled by the bride price received when a son is married, and given in the bride price of a daughter's marriage<sup>17</sup>. Brand further argues that the virtuous state of a woman is perceived as private wealth which can be easily transferred between families. Moreover, he highlights that there are no known honour killing cases at the higher levels of tribal hierarchy but instead it mostly occurs among the lower classes within extended families. Faqir<sup>18</sup> claims that honour killings are mostly observed among subordinated poor people, including the working class and other weak segments of the population. Kressel<sup>19</sup> associates cleansing of honour with future investment and adds that it is just like a strategic prospect asset in the future of family wealth.

With reference to the occurrence of honour killing for financial gains, Campbell<sup>20</sup> states that in the mountain communities of the Greek, honour is associated with power and wealth. In India, honour killing is likely the product of the clash between modern and traditional values, intensified by increasing social mobility and high economic growth<sup>21</sup>. Derne<sup>22</sup> explained that the conception of honour in India, particularly among the upper castes, is vital for family members in maintaining a consumer base, obtaining jobs and finding employment opportunities. Spatz<sup>23</sup> elaborates that in certain areas of Pakistan, the tradition of honour killing has worked as a system of compensation to a person who lost his honour as it provides an opportunity to make money or to conceal other crimes, termed 'honour killing industry' by Muhammad Haroon Bahlkani cited by Chesler and Bloom<sup>24</sup>.

Ali<sup>25</sup> explains that women are considered as male property in their family irrespective of their social class, ethnic or religious backgrounds and the owner has the right to decide their fate. He further expressed that this concept of ownership has turned women into a commodity which can be sold, bought and exchanged. Hussain<sup>26</sup> argues that the justification of an honour crime is used as a tool to increase personal wealth so as to blackmail a rival and extract money by

preserving his life. He further contends that sometimes a woman is killed by her husband for the purpose of marrying another woman who will be bringing a new dowry. Amnesty International's Report<sup>27</sup> notes that land feuds are the actual motives behind many honour killings. The Report further confirms that in this way, the murder of a woman as an honour killing in the family can be used as an effective way to blackmail someone and sue for financial gains which will be achieved through compromise.

### **Methodology**

The research study at hand was conducted in Kurram Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan with the sole objective to assess the role of economic factors contributing to the promotion of honour killing. Through preoperational allocation method, 377 respondents, i.e. 'Maliks' (Tribal Leaders), out of 1612 were randomly selected from districts Alizai, Sadda and Parachinar as the study universe, while using the criteria of sample size determination given by Sekaran<sup>28</sup>. The data was collected with the help of quantitative tools of data collection, i.e. a five level Likert scale based on an interview schedule ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The conceptual framework of the study consists of a dependent variable (honour killing) and an independent variable (economic aspects of honour killing). Moreover, the collected data was interpreted and presented at univariate level, to display the layout and clear picture of the data. Chi-Square test statistics were used both at the bivariate and multivariate levels. At the bivariate level, the dependent variable (honour killing) was indexed and crossed tabulated with the independent variable (economic aspects) to measure the effects of the dependent variable upon the independent variable. A similar procedure was adopted to measure and establish spurious or non-spurious associations between the dependent and independent variables at the multivariate level, while controlling for the marital status of the respondents.

### **Results and Discussion**

The economy, as an institution, is based on the knowledge about production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. However, some traditional societies still resist including women in economic affairs. For this research, the concept of the honour killing was investigated with the help of the following statements including: honour killing is common among all the classes; women are not killed for financial benefits; the upper class is more conscious about honour

norms; there is no contribution of women in economic resources; the lower class is more conscious about honour norms; inheritance disputes are a factor in honour killings; and there is no relationship between killing women and their share of inheritance from their parents.

**Table I. Frequency distribution and proportion of the respondents about economic aspect of honour killing**

Attributes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Bi-Variate
Honour killing is common among all classes	255(67.6)	48(12.7)	42(11.1)	20(5.3)	12 (3.2)	$\chi^2 = 3.225$ P=0.521
Women are not killed for financial benefits	233(61.8)	28 (7.4)	53(14.1)	63(16.7)	00 (0.0)	$\chi^2 = 27.954$ P=0.000
The upper class is more conscious about honour norms	28 (7.4)	26 (6.9)	204(54.1)	81(21.5)	38(10.1)	$\chi^2 = 12.352$ P=0.015
There is no contribution of women in the economy	321(85.1)	31 (8.2)	22 (5.8)	3 (0.8)	00 (0.0)	$\chi^2 = 7.269$ P=0.064
The lower class is more conscious about honour norms	40 (10.6)	11 (2.9)	204(54.1)	84(22.3)	38(10.1)	$\chi^2 = 6.471$ P=0.167
Inheritance disputes	00 (0.0)	2 (0.5)	22 (5.8)	52(13.8)	301(79.8)	$\chi^2 = 5.698$ P=0.127
There is no relationship between honour killing and women's parental share of inheritance	227(60.2)	6 (1.6)	44 (11.7)	100(26.5)	00 (0.0)	$\chi^2 = 21.376$ P=.0.000

### Explanation

Table I illustrates the influence of economic issues associated with honour killing at univariate and bivariate levels of analysis. The results suggest that the majority of respondents (255, or 67.6 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that honour killing is common

among all classes. It can be attributed to the collective response of people towards the culture of honour killing prevailing in the study universe. However, poor people were also found to have high inclinations towards honour killing, with very rigid views on it.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the majority of respondents (233, or 61.8 percent) strongly affirmed that women are not killed for financial benefits in tribal society. Cultural prerogatives were deeply felt, and honour-related issues were confined to shame and respect of a family. Economic considerations had no space for reciprocating honour killing in the study area. However, honour killing was a device to manage and serves men's interests<sup>30</sup>. Hence, honour killing was used as a tool to satisfy man's needs and wishes. Further, if a woman act was found in opposition to a patriarchal order, then she is the one who has to suffer physically<sup>31</sup>.

Unlike the above, a large number of respondents (204, or 54.1 percent) remained undecided about the notion that the upper class is more conscious about honour norms. These findings had similarities to Feldman<sup>32</sup> who stated that normative order to contain women role as per existing hierarchies and privileges stirs honour killing related crimes.

In relation to the above, the majority of respondents (321, or 85.1 percent) strongly considered the absence of women's contribution in the economy as highly important. This can be attributed to the secondary position of women in decision-making positions in the economy. A woman is often restricted to living within the four walls of a house, with the sole purpose of looking after the family and household chores. A woman is not economically independent due to lesser chances of liberty to attain empowerment and lack of literacy which restricts women to be independent<sup>33</sup>.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents (204, or 54.1 percent) remained undecided about the statement that the lower class is more conscious about honour norms. These findings can be attributed to the prevalence of honour killing in all *qaums* and classes of the study area. Nietzsche,<sup>34</sup> observing western society, concluded that honour killing is more prevalent among the members of lower classes. On the other hand, Messner<sup>35</sup> linked honour killing to family reputation and social standing within the community.

However, the majority of respondents (301, or 79.8 percent) strongly discarded the notion that inheritance disputes causes honour killing. It could be deduced that honour killing was a cultural phenomenon, and had no roots in economic aspect of human life in the study area. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Report<sup>36</sup> has also pointed towards the incidents of honour killing as being based on

family disputes. However, women were subjected to honour killing on the basis of social and economic considerations through its endorsement from cultural basis<sup>37</sup>.

Similarly, the majority of respondents (227, or 60.2 percent) strongly acknowledged that there is no relations of honour killing with women's parental share of inheritance in the study universe. However, women honour killing could not be separate from economic and monetary considerations in some of the cases pertaining to Pakistan<sup>38</sup>.

At the bivariate level, the relationship between economic aspects and honour killing was determined with the help of the following contentions. Economics is a primary institution in the ladder of social institutionalization processes. It strongly influences value-based judgments and carries greater impact over human relationships, attitudes and behaviors associated to these commodities. A flourishing economy has the upbeat of countering and eventuality, which could upset the prevalent patterns of social relationships by negotiating well in serving the interests of the community.

The above table reflects a non-significant association ( $P=0.521$ ) between commonality of honour killing among various social classes and honour killing. These results disclosed the heterogeneity of responses towards fulfilling the event of honour killing across all the segments and classes of the study area. Class may differ in negotiating the issue of honour killing. These variations in attitudinal tendencies could be attributed to the level of rigidity and openness within the social fabrics of classes in a society. It further needs to be explained that variations in approach was never meant to breach any prevalent norms, but rather negotiating these norms could be associated with the degree of freedom of each class on the basis of perceptions and outcomes of the event in terms of its repercussions. Moreover, these results also supported this argument as honour killing occurs more within the upper classes of the area as compared to the lower social classes. Literature supported the aforementioned statistics and negates theories regarding the occurrence of honour killing among the lower classes by concluding that honour crimes are mostly common among the lower classes within extended families and are based on the subordination of the poor people, working class, and the weak and powerless.<sup>39</sup>

Contrary to the above, a highly significant association ( $P=0.000$ ) is asserted between the notion that a woman is not killed for financial benefits and honour killing. It is obvious from the results that tribal people do not kill their women just for acquiring financial benefits and such killing was strictly associated to the breach of social

and cultural norms. These norms are highly respected and considered as akin to sacred, essentially requiring killing the violators of disobedience. Moreover, as observed in these findings, a woman was regarded as property/commodity with an intense association to a particular person. Only a particular male has the right to enjoy with her chastity. Extending her chastity to any other one except her husband was found to be a social and cultural taboo, which had to be met with a death penalty. These findings had close association in meaning to the findings of Korteweg<sup>40</sup> that honour killing is a gender based phenomena, and has no roots in other aspects of human life. However, in other parts of Pakistan, some studies have shown that honour killing is one of the mechanisms of extracting money as compensation from opponents<sup>41</sup>.

Moreover, a significant relationship ( $P=0.015$ ) is found between the statement that the upper class is more conscious about honour norms and honour killing. These results indicate that the upper class enjoys respect and esteem within the community. They cannot afford the social stigma of lost honour among other community members. These feelings were strongly associated to the prestige owned by upper classes in the capacity of leading entity, which they couldnot afford to lose. Social stigmatization could badly shatter the class structure in the society as shown by Hossain and Welchman,<sup>42</sup> who conclude that class structure is attached with honour crimes. The feudal structure perpetuates honour killing for the attainment of socio-political hold over the lower classes of local communities. Furthermore, class hierarchy and privileges provide roots for honour killing in social standing of the family in community with honour crimes.<sup>43</sup>

However, in contrast, a non-significant association ( $P=0.064$ ) unearthed the relationship between the absence of women's contribution in the economy and honour killing. It could be deduced from these findings that women have no liberty to do any job for cash and thus has no access to contributing to the economy and household resources. Moreover, although they were found doing their own household chores, these activities are mostly unpaid and obligatory on their part to perform. These findings were similar in nature and meaning to the observations of Ahmad,<sup>44</sup> that women are restricted to doing household chores. They are perceived to get married and go to the bridegroom's house, where their only job is to cook and wash dishes, raise children and perform other domestic activities. Contrary to this, while women need to become educated to look after their own affairs,<sup>45</sup> women's mobility, activities and behavior is monitored just to extend conformity to centuries-old traditions<sup>46</sup>.



Similarly, a non-significant relationship ( $P=0.167$ ) is seen that the lower class is more conscious about honour norms and honour killing. These findings are in consistent with the previous results, as a non-significant association ( $P=0.521$ ) is observed about the commonality of honour killing among various social classes and a significant relationship ( $P=0.015$ ) is found in the case of more consciousness of upper class about honour norms. The results suggest that the study area was very homogenous on the basis of caste and lineage. All respondents had unanimous access to the mechanisms of the prevalent social system. The event of honour killing was not confined to a particular class, rather obligatory on each class to respond to the call of misconduct and deviation with all force and might to curb. It can be deduced that the law of collective responsibility encourages and entails the mass scale participation towards any extraneous adventurism. However, the poor, renter and migrated families in the area were not highly integrated into the tribal social setup, and as a result they may not have had such strict observance of honour norms. Brint<sup>47</sup> also emphasizes the power of conformity to a social system even if it carries harsh punishments to any kind of offender.

Similarly, a non-significant relationship ( $P=0.127$ ) is observed between inheritance disputes and honour killing. These findings have the support to the preceding inferences where honour killing had no roots in financial matters. Rather, it is based on pure breach of cultural norms which are declared as taboo. However, contrary to these results, Amnesty International's Report<sup>48</sup> argues that sometimes women are killed for the attainment of her share in property. Furthermore, Brand<sup>49</sup> also considers that many honour killings are in fact economic crimes committed against female family members with whom they are having a dispute over inheritance.

However, a highly significant relationship ( $P=0.000$ ) is identified between there being no relationship of killing with women's parental share of inheritance and honour killing. These results suggest that honour killing had no relationship with keeping women's parental share of inheritance for a man in the study universe. It could be the reason that the local women were deprived from their right of inheritance if they ever received any share in their parental property. These findings negate the inferences of Brand<sup>50</sup> that honour killing had economic reasons as they are killed in light of the disputes over inheritance. Moreover, according to the local written customary practices which are followed equally by the inhabitants of Lower Kurram Agency and Upper Kurram Agency, namely *Turizuna*<sup>51</sup> "a child in the womb of mother is competent to inherit property provided that he

is born alive within nine months of the death of its father and is male, but an illegitimate child is not entitled to inherit nor is any female child unless the right to inherit in favour of a legitimate female child is created by means of will” (Turizuna, Section-4,a). It could be inferred from the above text of *Turizuna* that a legitimate, unborn female child has the right of inheritance in parental property only if there was a written will of the father about female children for giving their share in inheritance. By using only the word “father” in the text also shows that women were avoided in case of inheritance. Furthermore, it can also be deduced that women had no right of inheritance as *Turizuna* is totally silent about the due share of female property. Thus, the study results were totally in consonance with the prevailing normative standards of the study universe. In this context, Hossain and Welchman<sup>52</sup> revealed that women with property has an association with honour killing, whereby a husband desires to get rid of a wife in order to get her property.

**Table II association between Economic Aspects and Honour Killing At Multivariate Level while Controlling For Marital Status**

Marital Status	Economic aspects	Honour Killing		Total	Statistics
		Agree	Disagree		
Married					
	Agree	84(24%)	86(24.6%)	170(48.6%)	X <sup>2</sup> =5.359 P=.069
	Disagree	69(19.7%)	111(31.7%)	180(51.4%)	
Unmarried	Agree	7(25.9%)	6(22.2%)	13(48.1%)	X <sup>2</sup> =1.605 P=.448
	Disagree	9(33.3%)	5(18.5%)	14(51.9%)	

### Explanation

Controlling for marital status, the relationship between honour killing and economic aspects was non-significant ( $P > 0.069$ ) in married people. Similarly, a non-significant ( $P > 0.448$ ) relationship also prevailed among the unmarried group of respondents. These results were in close inference to the preceding conclusions that the issue of honour killing in Pakhtun culture is totally based on cultural values and normative orders, and has no relation with financial benefits. The roots behind this act were found to be deeply held within the culture and nobody was found to shoulder any effort to alter it. Its aim is based on providing a peaceful social environment, devoid of feuds at family and community levels.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that honour killing is a cultural perspective in tribal areas, and has no links with economic gains. Killing a woman for economic benefits had no place in the study universe, although killing in the name of honour was not similar in respect of class structure. The upper classes of the area have a heightened consciousness regarding honour-related norms as compared to the lower classes, and males consider they have complete ownership of women. Women of the area neither make any contribution to the economic resources of the family nor are they killed for inheritance disputes and their parental share of inheritance. Controlling for marital status of the respondent at the multivariate level, neither married nor unmarried men were prone to the idea of honour killing as a financial aspect of social life.

There are a number of policy recommendations that emerge in light of this study's findings. The provision of share in property in the shape of inheritance and access to property needs to be revitalized through enactment of relevant laws from different legislative forums. Moreover, the provision of equal opportunities to women is crucial, especially among tribal *Pakhtuns*, to extinguish the idea of women as property. In addition, there needs to be inclusion of reading materials in the syllabi about human rights in general and women's rights in particular, and community discussions to encourage local buy-in to these ideas.

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