

Honour Killings in Islamic Countries in 21st Century

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Honor killing - a vicious act committed often under the heat-of-passion - is a crime that still impacts our lives despite the progression of the human race towards modernity and all that it pertains. They are in essence, "...murders carried out by family members against girls and women who are believed to have committed a sexual indiscretion, or to have caused gossip related to sexual behavior; that besmirches the honor of the family" ([1], 322). This abhorrent culture of killing for honor is not newfound, but has plagued our lives since centuries, dating even as back as 1200 B.C.E. in Peru, where the Incas permitted honor killings of wives who were suspected by their husbands to have committed acts of adultery ([2], 29). Although the general outlook of human society now is shifting gradually towards humanism, countries that are built upon Islamic laws often turn a blind eye towards honor killing, while some even go to the extent of encouraging, arguing that "...killing one who has transgressed, amounts to exercising the religious duty of "fending off sin"" ([3], 951). This begs the question what is the major reason behind the honor killings of 21 century in the Islamic countries, whether it an act of modesty or barbarism? As apparent through my tone during the course of this outline, I believe that honor killings do nothing more than serve to satisfy the fragile egos of men who decide to take up the law - which is often times subjected to the patriarchal values and mindset of the lawmakers in such Islamic countries - in their own hands.

While honor killings are an alarming cause of concern for a government that fails to exercise control on its people, thereby posing a threat to law and order; what is even more disturbing about these killings is that an entire gender is subject to unfairness and is in constant fear for its life, even from people who share the same blood. These are the reasons why I have chosen this particular topic to shed light on the ill-treatment of women who attempt to exercise their free-will, whose only fault perhaps, was to be born in such a country.

For the purposes of this paper, I shall be conducting research using articles from journals found online. Due to the time constraints, it is not a viable option to conduct an extensive study for this course, I shall be relying on both quantitative and qualitative data available to me through these sources. Perhaps the biggest drawback of using existing research on a sensitive topic like this is that the difference in cases that were reported and between those that actually occurred can never fully be ascertained; such cases are either brushed down by the members of family, or the authorities responsible to catch and sentence the perpetrators often don't pay much heed to such deaths. The fact that prior to 1953 in Jordan there were not any case reports related to honor killings ([3], 924), and that countries like Iraq and Iran that are notorious for honor killings do not report accurate statistics ([2], 31) further corroborates my argument.

I believe it is high-time that society opens up its eyes to the sheer monstrosity that takes place and raises its voice for those who are silenced forever at the hands of these violent men. This research paper could therefore not only be an educational piece for the general public, but also for concerned authorities to learn from and take preventive measures to ensure that incidents like these do not go unaccounted for! [4,5].

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