

**CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF KAR KARI A CASE STUDY OF JACOBABAD- SINDH- PAKISTAN****Dr.Najma Noor Phulpoto***Associate Professor-Deptt:of Sociology  
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[faizanmy2000@hotmail.com](mailto:faizanmy2000@hotmail.com)***ABSTRACT**

*This research investigates the cultural consequences of Karo Kari. Data were collected from 500 respondents from Jacobabad and their vicinity. A structural questionnaire was developed for the reliability and validity of the data. It was revealed that more than 500 cases of Karo Kari reported from Jacobabad District in their vicinity. It was further revealed that cultural consequences and poor literacy rate are major cause of Karo kari. The biggest challenges which they were facing they were doing all business in house, lack of marketing facilities, Karo Kari criminal activities and they were deprived from the basic rights. The number of women who died of stove burns in the first six months of 1992 was 500 compared to 570 murders that took place at the same time*

**Keywords:** *Cultural, Consequences, Karo Kari.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Over the past few years, an increased incidence of karo-kari ‘blackened man, blackened woman’ in Sindhi – has further blotted Pakistan’s already negative women’s right’s record. Rooted in patriarchal and cultural perceptions of women as male property, karo-kari ostensibly takes place to avenge family ‘honour’ when a woman violates tribal or cultural norms<sup>1</sup>. Karo-kari is carried out when a woman and man have an illicit relationship, or are even suspected of having one, since public perception of the woman’s guilt is considered sufficient to taint family ‘honour’. Reports indicate that inevitably, the practice targets women, who are never given an opportunity to defend themselves against the allegations. Perceived as the embodiment of honour of their family by entering an adulterous relationship. Thus, both real and perceived the women indirectly challenge the social order as a whole. She becomes Kari (Sindhi) Siah Kari (Baluch). A large proportion of murder in the name of honour – are carried out because a couple has married or wishes to marry against the family will. Karo-kari has also taken place in situations when women seek divorce, and sometime for defiling the family or tribal ‘honour’ by being raped. *Karis* remain dishonoured even after death. Their dead bodies are thrown in rivers or buried in special hidden *kari* graveyards. Nobody mourns for them or honours their memory by performing the relevant rites. *Karos* by contrast are reportedly buried in the communal graveyard<sup>2</sup>.

Two main factors contribute to violence against women in the name of honour: women’s commoditisation and conceptions of honour. The end result is that the right to life of women in Pakistan is conditional on their obeying social norms and traditions. The concept of women as an object or commodity, not a human being endowed with dignity and rights equal to those of men, is deeply rooted in the tribal culture. Dr Tahira Shahid Khan of Shirkatgah, a woman’s resource centre, points out: “Women are considered the property of the males in their family irrespective of their class, ethnic or religious groups. The owner of the property has the right to decide its fate. The concept of ownership has turned women into a commodity which can be exchanged, bought and sold. Similarly, a close observer of women’s issues in Sindh, journalist Nafisa Shah says: “In the tribal society of Sindh and Balochistan, a woman is equated with money. ... But although she has monetary value, her worth is essentially that of a commodity and this view goes far towards creating a situation when she may be butchered if she transgresses the conditions under which she is bound to a man for life. She may also be freely

<sup>1</sup> *Human Development in South Asia 2000: The Gender Question* Mehub-ul-Haq Human Development Center p.92

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Rehman, *The legal rights of women in Pakistan: Theory & Practical*, 1998, p.9

traded or given away as part of a *karo-kari* settlement.” A woman raped shames the community and hence becomes the Kari.

### **Killings under the pretext of honour**

“Honour killing was punishment for violating the honour codes but the tribes have subverted the custom of killing not for honour but to obtain the compensation that the tribal settlement awards to the aggrieved person”, Nafisa Shah summarizes.<sup>38</sup> In honour killings if both the *kari* and *karo* are killed, the matter ends; if only the *kari* is killed and the *karo* escapes -- as is often the case -- he has to compensate the affected man, for the damage to honour he inflicted, for the woman's worth who was killed and to have his own life spared<sup>3</sup>. This provides easy opportunities for the unscrupulous to make money, obtain a woman in supposed compensation or to conceal other crimes. As Nafisa Shah puts it, a whole ‘honour killing industry’ has sprung up with a range of stakeholders including tribes people, police administration and tribal mediators. “Vested interests ... use the excuse of honour as a blanket cover for a multitude of sins.”<sup>4</sup> The desire to obtain land may also lie behind some fake honour killings. Unable to repay loans, some men are known to have killed a woman of their own family to implicate someone in the debtor's family to ensure the loan would be extinguished in compensation<sup>5</sup>. Increasingly the Karo Kari Concept is being extended to diverse situations and is used as a cover for other killings. There are several reports of men murdering an enemy and following it up by murdering a woman from their own family to give it the colour of Karo Kari. The practice has no basis in Islamic stems from tribal or feudal practice.

### **Research Design:**

The study anticipated that the women have an opinion about the issues of domestic violence and that violence left a negative remark in their life. A central aim of the project was to find out the specific problem areas, their underlying causes and what were the possible solutions at the macro and micro level.

### **Data Collection Methodology**

Data were collected from both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative methods involved initial focus group meetings that were followed by the survey questionnaire. The focus groups were felt necessary in order to make the respondents themselves identify issues that could be explored further. Data were collected from 500 respondents from Jacobabad and their vicinity. A structural questionnaire was developed for the reliability and validity of the data.

### **The family**

Women need to be empowered through education, employment opportunities, legal literacy, and right to inheritance. Human rights education and information regarding domestic violence should be provided to them because this is a matter of their absolute rights. Integrated supportive services, legal intervention and redress should be made available in situations of domestic violence.

### **Local community**

Culture is not static, and newer forms of cultural norms need to be developed that respect women and promote their dignity and safety. For example, religious leaders should be encouraged to re-examine doctrines and cultural practices that lead to the subordination of women and violation of their rights. Local council bodies (e.g., the ‘panchayat’ system in India) should play a strong role in creating a culture of non-violence, in setting up sanctions, negotiating appropriate local cultural responses to preventing violence, and monitoring respect for, and implementation of, the sanctions that are in place. Creating awareness about the impact of domestic violence on communities conveys the importance of preventing such violence against women and children. Developing integrated responses to domestic violence through involvement of local community groups, community health workers and women serves to create sustainability and accountability, which in itself is a significant step.

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS** for doctors, lawyers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, welfare workers and other professionals are key players in opposing violence against women. Their members may come into contact with situations of domestic violence on a regular basis, but may not recognize the signs because of their own biases, background or lack of training. It is critical that such organizations build domestic violence and human rights curricula into their professional training, and that professionals in the field receive regular training on these areas. Such associations need to develop protocols for identifying and referring cases of

<sup>3</sup> Nafisa Shah: *A story in black: Karo Kari Killings in upper Sindh*, REUTER Foundation Paper 100 ford 1998 p.5

<sup>4</sup> *Newsline*, April 1998, p.18

<sup>5</sup> Massoudansari, “Blind Justice” in *Herald*, November, 1997 p.87

domestic violence to appropriate bodies, and screening measures for detection and early intervention. These protocols must be developed in collaboration with experts in the domestic violence field.

### **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

(NGOs), like women's organizations, have worked in partnership with government agencies and international organizations to provide a diversity of services, and education and awareness programmes. Their capacity to continue to deliver a range of services should be strengthened, particularly in collaboration with state agencies.

NGOs have a fundamental role to play in bringing pressure on governments to ratify, or withdraw their reservations to, the international human rights instruments such as the UDHR, CEDAW and the CRC. NGOs have played a critical role in monitoring implementation of non-treaty instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

**THE PRIVATE SECTOR** has a vested interest in addressing this problem since the costs of domestic violence to society, and industry in particular, are phenomenal in terms of low productivity, absenteeism, and staff turnover. The private sector should also be encouraged to finance preventive and support services in the local community.

**THE MEDIA** plays a pivotal role in both influencing and changing social norms and behaviour. Repeated exposure to violence in the media has been associated with increased incidence of aggression, especially in children. In the area of domestic violence, media campaigns can help to reverse social attitudes that tolerate violence against women by questioning patterns of violent behaviour accepted by families and societies.<sup>59</sup> Collaboration with the media needs to focus on creating new messages and new responses to reduce domestic violence. Hence a conscious effort to make media professionals aware of the issues, can play an important role in addressing violence against women.

**RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND SCHOLARS** need to re-examine interpretations of religious texts and doctrines from the perspective of promoting equality and dignity for women. Many men who abuse women justify such behaviour on a religious basis, and many cultural practices that abuse and violate women are justified in the name of religion. Religious leaders at all levels have a responsibility to ensure that religious interpretations are not used to oppress women.

### **Conclusion**

The current research explores the cultural consequences of Karo kari in Jacobabad District. Consistent support for women must be provided by all relevant sectors – the criminal justice system, health, welfare, and the private sector. Support must also be available to women via informal networks such as family, friends, neighbours, and local community groups. Men should receive one consistent message from all sectors and levels of society – that those who perpetrate violence will be held accountable. The criminal justice system must act to reinforce this message by taking action against perpetrators, as well as providing rehabilitation options for those who offend. Support services need to address associated behaviour patterns such as drug and alcohol problems or the risky sexual behaviour in which adolescent girls and boys may indulge as a result of being victimized themselves.

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