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The Curse of Honor

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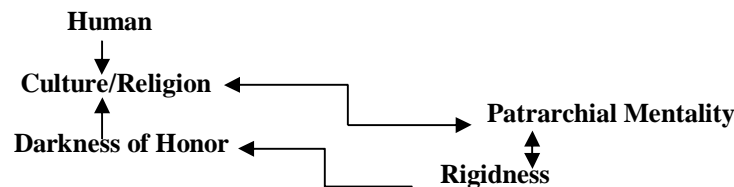
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Abstract:

The Constitution of India provides the basic Fundamental Rights to its citizens like, Rights to – Equality, Freedom of Speech, Livelihood, Liberty, etc.. But, unfortunately, people are so stuck to their cultures that – they can tolerate a stranger pissing in the public, but cannot tolerate the inter-caste marriage or a victim of sexual assault or the sexual orientation of a person, even if he is the member of the family. Such people feel, its good to be inhuman rather than being un-cultured. However, it has been strictly observed that the practical approach of people differs from their sayings, what they believe they don't say and what they say they don't believe in it. It can be assumed that the society has turned off their humanity switch in the vague name of honor and misconception of culture or religion.

Keywords: Be noble, live, and let others live



*“Girl Lover Hanged in Haryana Village”
“Delhi: Father, Son Arrested for Honor Killing”
“Another Honor Killing: Couple Shot in Aligarh”*

Death is the vicious circle of life, one who has shown up in the world, eventually has to leave it by the mercy of almighty. But death's like this, are a curse for the humanity, and it is not limited to just this, there are many more headlines we ought to have a glance at, daily. This curse is a slow poison, which merged in our lives with the emergence of cultures.

This brings us to a very typical question....who created culture or religion in the world, GOD or HUMAN...the almighty created Humans who in-turn created different illogical aspects i.e. CULTURE & RELIGION, instead of just living and serving to the mankind. The culture or religion in which we are born & bought up is the one which is solely responsible of the differences among people in society on the basis of sex, caste or religion, which bounds us to be above or beneath other individuals. Society is following this system from such a long time and blindly like a sheep follows its cattle, that the question, which created this system of living is kept untouched.

Now, we are so stuck to this system that, if someone tries to go beyond the boundaries, has to face the consequences and is therefore treated like a rotten corpse among the humans. All this happens in the vague name of HONOR, which leads us to the darkness. People are dogmatic and therefore cannot accept the dynamic world around them and there would be no internal peace in the country even if boundaries get secured.

In simple words, the curse of the honor is the homicides committed by the people in the name of pride of themselves resting in their culture, religion or family. We actually forget a basic view that until now and not even in future_ no one can be honored at the expense of another's life. God is the sole judge of right and wrong. Like earlier said, trying to be the God of the family or community does not create a hero rather unleashes a beast in the society. Even the law of democratic countries forbids the idea of capital

punishment, with a view that they have no right to take the life of someone which they have not given, than how an orthodox mind can commit homicide of innocent people by considering them as a mere disgrace on the family or community.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH describes Honor Killing as, *a woman can be targeted by (individual within) her family for a variety of reasons, including: refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce – even from an abusive husband – or (allegedly) committing adultery. The mere perception that a woman has behaved in a way that “dishonors” her family is sufficient to trigger an attack on her life*¹.

In simple words Honor crimes are the murders committed mostly by dominant part of society on the weaker section of society (i.e. males on females), because of the disgrace they have bought on family or community. The supporters or the participants in such grave crimes, justify their act as an intention to uphold the morals of the religion or culture in which they grew up, even if those culture or religion taken in true sense actually hurls the doings of so-called demons.

*On 2008 Noida sector20, (India) Aarushi Talwar a girl of age 13 years was murdered by her parents as they found her in a objectionable position with their servant in night. Though she bought disgrace to their family, she was killed and the servant was also murdered. The case was appealed in Allahabad High Court and Hon'able Supreme Court too, but was rejected both time and the culprits were sentenced for life imprisonment*².

*In Delhi, a Rajasthan girl of age 21 married to a Punjabi boy Abhishek Seth of age 24, but apparently, the parents & the uncle of the girl, opposed her marriage, so, eventually she had to die from their hands. The father was a property dealer, whereas the uncle was a member of a political party*³.

From the above case it is clear that even the political system of the country is biased and rotten to the depth of their mentality, concluding that the victims of such crimes cannot seek for justice, as the law-makers itself are the part of such practices and moreover have a lot of influence on the executer system too.

The mental status of such people brings a dogmatic attitude of theirs, which cannot be justified. As it is rightly said that “standing water brings diseases and odor, whereas the flowing water is mesmerizing. Similarly, refusing the changes in culture or religion brings odor and diseases from them”, therefore initiates such crimes which are against mankind.

Generally, the people who are the main participators in such crimes are the- husband, brother, father or relatives. Sometimes the people of the community become the main participators. These crimes are conducted brutally, that's why severe legal action are taken against the people involved in such grave crimes and to avoid those legal sanction, people also leave the victim with the option of suicide. Those forced or compelled suicides are also the part of Honor killings.

*On 2015, Lucknow, India bodies of a boy and a girl aged 20 & 19 years, respectively were found suspended from a tree in a village on Sunday morning, as the parents of the girl Priti Lodhi was against her relationship with Kuldeep Rawat due to caste barriers and had fixed the marriage of the girl with someone else. Therefore, the couple was left with no choice other than suicide. The development of this phenomenon was appeared to be a relatively recent development*⁴.

Honor killings are basically done to widespread a message by the participators or the supporters- that anyone who will bring disgrace to the family or the culture will come to an end in this way. Therefore, the act of violence includes lynching of couples, homicide of either the men or the women, murder turned into suicide, public beatings/harassment, and social boycotts or levying of fines.

The obstacle in maintaining peace internally in the county is not a situation of one country only. On the whole, it has developed its roots in all over the world since ancient times. As all over the world the concept of male dominating society was prevailing. The man was termed as the bread earner and all his actions, no matter right or wrong, was termed as an action to maintain pride .i.e. HONOR of the family, community or religion. Whereas, any action of a women against the will of the man in society beyond its right nature, was considered to be a dishonor or disgrace by everyone. Indeed, honor and honor based violence are reflected in many historical events and even in works of literature. Just like;

In early Britain the wife of Henry V11 was beheaded due to the mere allegations of committing adultery; the famous literature of Shakespeare, Romeo & Juliet were tracked to death an ancient love story against the vague of society; and many more executions that took place in the world around us.

¹ International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences Vol 6, 2011: by Anand Kriti, Prateek Kumar & Rachna Yadav

² Dr. Rajesh Talwar & another v. Central Bureau of Investigation 2013 (82) ACC 303

³ November 20, 2014 TOI

⁴ February 23, 2015 TOI

Even if we explore our background, then we will come to know the real demons inside us as in India it is being said that women have a very highly dignified position and the country is deemed as democratic country, but, when it comes to the practical life treatments the country cannot be deemed as democratic country nor do women have a highly dignified position. It is rightly said that 'history speaks itself', if we focus on our past then we will discover that a very cruel ritual was prevailing in the country termed as SATI PRATHA, which began to happen willfully, but later on was made a compulsion. In this, the wives were burned alive with the corpse of her husband. This ritual started from religious event, where goddess SATI committed suicide to save the honor of her beloved husband SHIVA.

The participators or supporters of such grave crimes gain honor in taking the life of other person. This brings us to a very interesting fact that what are the reasons of these homicides that are immoral by nature.

The justifications given are that they are digging the lost honor of them not the grave of innocent people. The person doing so is full of rage as the patriarchal ego is on hurt, which creates a feeling of hatred and the person forgets all his emotions right or wrong. The feeling of hatred emerges because they feel that being raped, committing adultery, marrying in other caste is a crime against their culture and lacks to see that it is not a crime in the eyes of law or humanity.

The term "*honor*" means great respect or a clear sense of what is right⁵. The term lays focus on the values or morals, but the concept of Honor was misunderstood by the society on the grounds of religion, culture, custom or community. People feel that whosoever goes beyond the culture is morally wrong without questioning the things on the grounds of humanity.

The culture or religion in which we are dwelling says to spread love, than how that culture can be against the idea of love marriages. If this simple fact was understood to the people than, Manoj and Babli of karora village, khaital district, Haryana doesn't have to die. *The innocent couple decided to marry against the will of their family and community member, who was not digested to the khap panchayat the leader of the panchayat, gave a order to deacease them both. In 2010, karnal district court gave verdict against the participators of such grave crime and they were held liable*⁶.

Here a very important fact was observed that, after the order of the khap panchayat Manoj & Babli were executed. So, why the panchayat wanted them dead; what was in their mind... The mindset of such panchayat is that- the couple who decided to get married on their own, is just fulfilling the sexual needs of each other, therefore, it is against our customs and values. So, they will not be entertained by the society. Hence, either they will be executed or they have of face social boycotts or would be broken to a point where they have to commit suicide.

According to the above facts, it is crystal clear that it is the mindset of the society that influences people to commit homicide, not the religion, custom, or family. Just as when we hear a word like ghost, the first basic impression in our mind would be a horrible image, similarly, the word God gives image of an almighty in our mind. Surprisingly, people confront those images in their mind what they have been listening from others. Someone has rightly said, 'don't judge a book by its cover', similarly people should not prejudice something just on the mere sayings of others. In simple language 'do not create a misconception of something or someone without confronting it', as what we think is what others made us to think. If a person justifies his sin of committing homicide to save the honor of its family or culture, or justifies his feeling of being against a rape-victim, homosexual, love marriage, or anything must be asked a question than, "is killing an innocent not a crime in the eyes of humanity or god?"

What actually is matter is that the concept of honor is misunderstood. It is deemed as, whatever a man or culture says is right, rest is wrong.....either follow it blindly or die. The society is scarstic as: it can praise the skills of a porn star in films, but hate to accept a rape victim: it can accept the love marriages of stars like Arbaz Khan and Malika Arora, but not of a common men, as the big people are aliens to them; it can accept the child they have as a gift from god, but not their sexuality.

We live in such a great society that will not fail to inherit its mentality to their upcoming, but fail to inherit traits, legacy or anything else. For an instance, *in 2007 Madhya Pradesh, a girl was found dead with a suicide note, explaining the reason of her doing so as her relation which lead to the cost of sexual abuse, but later on, after police investigation, it was discovered that the girl was murdered and the culprits were her parents, who opposed her relation, and the suicide note was written by her sister who was of seven years.*

Despite of everything happening around us on the name of Honor, I salute the Indian film industry as well as daily soap industry, for their breath taking efforts to wake the sleepy public of India to bring a change not for anyone for themselves. NH-10, Aarakshan, Nana iss dess meri ladoo, and many more examples are there, by which a message is widespread that the time has changed and the society needs to come up and cope up with the change.

⁵ Oxford English Dictionary

⁶ The Hindu March 12, 2011

Despite of everything a very serious fact was observed that, mostly the females were the target of honor crimes and sometimes the both men & women. Is it so? Is being a woman a crime? No not at all, but the patriarchal mentality says so.....after observing everything, I strongly recommend that the concept of Female Feticide on the basis of gender discrimination should be bought under the concept of honor killing, as the basic view while discriminating is that the BOY is the one who will make them proud in society, therefore the GIRL will become a burden on them and will destroy their respect in society.....simply, such people feel that a girl is a curse on them which needs to be eradicated, and they should focus on their greed of boy. This entire dramatic situation arises, due to the mentality of society towards girl child, which is pathetic.

→ Mother; Father; Brother__There Is a Bit of Her in Every one so Let Her Live

A very common thing that reaches to our ears is that Education is the key to remove these barriers from society.... But such sayings actually contradicts their practical applicability, as the education level of a person rises, his mindset to maintain a fake image in society rises, he gets affected from society more and more. Due to which he acts according to the mind instead of listening to his heart.

The biggest problem of our society is that, they believe in saying not doing. People say that India is a democratic country as well as the land of colorful cultures, but, when it comes to do what we say, the sides of the table turns.....democratic country turns to the dictatorship of orthodox mentality, even the different color of cultures turns to red (the color of blood).

The misconception of people regarding the term HONOR is not limited to this, it has given rise to different social evils as_untouchability, rich and poor, and many more, which is clearly shown in the movie Manjhi The Mountain Man.

What a shame, these actions actually bring on to that family or culture, which has its hand washed with the blood of their beloved ones." *Every coin has two sides*", similarly people just view and practice the dark side, which is easy to go on, but, fails to observe the true side of fighting with the society for what is right rather than fighting with beloved ones for the fake society, as it is a tough call to make.

In Haryana April, 2011 at village Ranila, two women were dragged and murdered brutally by a person who was sentenced to jail for rape charge and was out on parole in front of the whole village to save the honor of his family, as the women were together in a relation, which he found hard to digest in his family, as one of them was his aunt⁷.

In New York, July 19, 2014 a girl had undergone the circumstances of attempted murder by her family members as she was raped at the age of 10 years by a 'maulana' who considered her to be of 17 years in explanation for his sin⁸.

A research was made to state the mentality of people on various grounds which strengthen the foundation of our topic:

Through the research we came across various situations, where we found that our society is still rising on the pillars of orthodox mentality instead of building a new world of equality and justice. Over all 10 people were chosen from society randomly 5 literate & 5 illiterate to cover the grounds of love-marriage and status of a rape-victim in society. , out of this 80% people were against the concept of love marriage, just because they feel that this concept is against their rituals and customs, as are purely based on the sexual needs, moreover they felt that arrange marriages last longer. This concept of marriage took us to a very serious question that can a rape-victim be wife or daughter in law in any family? Why not? The cruel incident faced by the girl is not her fault actually; it is the inhumanity of the person committing it. During research we found that around 90% people denied to accept a rape-victim in their family, moreover we came across a aged person saying that a girl provokes rape and she can be raped again as she get raped as a name tag, he even dares to say that the Delhi gang rape case was the fault of the girl being against our customs and rituals.....the person remained silent when asked if his daughter was at the place of that girl, then who's fault he would consider?

At the end, I strongly recommend that, there should be special provision made under the law for Honor Killings and the concept of Female Feticide on the basis of sex discrimination should be the part of Honor killing; government should increase and willfully support the practices of LOVE COMMANDOES or special rescue team from police officials for the couples who decided to get married, but are in risk of being killed, or proper surveillance of such khap panchayats under police officials; awareness regarding homosexuality should be widespread so that, they could be treated like humans too; the NGO'S like PUNCH should be motivated and developed so that rape-victims cannot suffer the guilt in their rest of life of the wrong which they have not committed; government should be sure that , if someone commits adultery, then must be punished legally not immorally.

Make sure that the society confronts a time, where, there are no social evils outside and inside the country, all it has is humanity...which will live it to the eternity not the misery.

⁷ April 17, 2011 India Today News

⁸ October 25, 2014 New York Times

Culture and religion were made to give the people a sense of hope in their lives, so that they could cope up with all the up's & down of life, unfortunately, the sense of hope turned to sense of life. We do not blame culture or religion for slaughtering humanity, all we say is that the society needs to change its mentality to get the essence of faith back, to be faithful to mankind.

→ To Each and Every Evil Intention, There Is a Scope of Humanity

References

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- v. Oxford English Dictionary
- vi. The Hindu March 12, 2011
- vii. April 17, 2011 India Today News
- viii. October 25, 2014 New York Times

Annexure**Questionnaire**

1. Are you aware about the terms?

PORNSTAR RAPE VICTIM WIDOW

2. What are your opinions regarding the status of below mentioned terms in society?

PORNSTAR: _____

RAPE-VICTIM: _____

WIDOW: _____

3. Can you accept a rape victim as your daughter-in law or wife?

YES NO

Why?

4. Condition of the lives of a widow and a rape victim:

(i) Do you favor the idea of saving the life of a *widow* by re-marrying her?

YES NO

(ii) The people in society can re-marry a *widow* to save her life, but cannot support the idea of marrying a *rape-victim* to save the life and pride of the girl or the country.....! COMMENT...

Questionnaire

1. Your age lies between?

18-30 31-40
 40 or ABOVE 40

2. Are you literate?

YES NO

(IF YES, THEN KINDLY MENTION _____)

3. Which type of marriage do you prefer?

(a) *For yourself;*

LOVE MARRIAGES ARRANGED MARRIAGES
 LIVE-IN-RELATIONSHIP

(b) *For your son/daughter;*

LOVE MARRIAGES ARRANGED MARRIAGES
 LIVE-IN-RELATIONSHIP

4. Why would you prefer that?

(a) _____

(b) _____

CAN'T SAY

5. Are you against other options? [With respect to -3 (b)]

YES NO
 NO, BUT NOT COMPLETELY YES, BUT NOT COMPLETELY