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## Empowering Change: Gender-Based Violence and Legal Measures in Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the predicament of women in Pakistan inside a strongly rooted patriarchal system in a concise manner. It discusses the pervasiveness of patriarchal notions, such as societal conventions, gender segregation, and the relationship between female virtue and family reputation. Patriarchal ideals are well-engrained in Pakistani society, relegating women to a position of subordination. The patriarchy uses techniques such as gender segregation, restricted social norms for women, and an ideology that associates female virtue with respect for one's family to keep women under control. This study investigates different sorts of violence against women, including honor killings, sexual assault, acid assaults, abduction, and domestic abuse. According to a 2011 Thomson Reuters Foundation poll, Pakistan is the third most dangerous country for women. The author also emphasizes the inextricable link between patriarchy and violence, as well as the critical importance of increasing women's role in culture, politics, and the economy, and discusses the legal measures adopted by the State to combat and reduce such violence.



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## **1. Introduction**

Violence against women and girls is a serious problem that has to be addressed right away since it violates fundamental human rights. It's not a myth; in fact, it occurs on every continent. It affects people of all ages and backgrounds equally. Women across the world endure a wide range of types of violence daily, including domestic violence (including spousal murder), ceremonial honor killings, custodial abuse and torture, and sexual assault (Wendt & Zannettino, 2014).

Pakistan's rating of 141st out of 142 in terms of economic possibilities and political engagement of women is indicative of the widespread gender gap that exists in the country. This imbalance between the sexes lowers women's status in society and leaves them more susceptible to assault. Gender discrimination stems from the idea that men are inherently better than women. Whether it takes place in public or private settings, the United Nations defines gender-based violence as "any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty." Violence against women is defined as "any act involving use of force or coercion with aim to perpetuate or promote hierarchical gender relations" by the Asia Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD) in 1990. As a societal mechanism, violence against women is used to keep women in a position of subordination to men.

Patriarchal ideals are well-engrained in Pakistani society, relegating women to a position of subordination. The patriarchy uses techniques such as gender segregation, restricted social norms for women, and an ideology that associates female virtue with respect for one's family to keep women under control. The deviant, immoral, and harmful customary practices that aim to sustain women's slavery and are maintained and sanctified as cultural traditions with religious overtones are among the most pervasive factors working against women's dignity in Pakistan. For many decades, Pakistani women have faced gender disparities, and despite legislation aimed at strengthening women, the problem has not been rectified. Pakistan was placed 151st out of 153 developing nations in the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020, below Yemen and Iraq (Razi, Zahoor, Abbas, & Jamshed, 2020). Gender-based violence is a serious human rights issue, and reports indicate that it is on the rise in Pakistan (Amnesty International, 2002; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 1999). Some examples of aberrant and immoral behavior that are all too widespread in Pakistan include honour killings, rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, acid attacks, being burnt, abduction, domestic violence, dowry murder, forced marriages, custodial abuse, and torture. According to the results of a poll done by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2011, Pakistan is the third most dangerous country in the world for women. In Pakistan, if a woman reports being physically or sexually assaulted, she is often met with scorn and shamed along with her family. Victims of rape in Pakistan often don't come out for fear of repercussions from society.

Patriarchal societies are reflected and symptomized by gender-based violence. Violence against women has been characterized as a societal process in men's subjection of women, as argued by Davierwalla (1996). As a further means of establishing their dominance, some men frequently resort to violence

against women. The patriarchal system relies on violence to maintain itself. Therefore, according to feminist theory, patriarchal culture is one of the root causes of violence against women. Men's violence against women in Pakistan is best understood within the context of patriarchy that keeps women in their place and dictates their behavior according to societal standards and beliefs.

## **2. Literature Review:**

Research studies, reports, academic papers, and policy documents on the theme of gender-based violence in Pakistan will all be combed through for a literature review. The scope of the literature review can include the following important topics: (i) Prevalence and Types of Gender-Based Violence: Domestic violence, sexual assault, honour killings, forced marriages, and harassment are only some of the kinds of gender-based violence that have been studied in Pakistan. Examine the disparities in violent crime that exist among geographical areas, socioeconomic categories, and underserved communities. (ii) Legal Framework and Policies: Analyze Pakistan's current policies and laws on violence against women. Analyze how well laws and regulations are being implemented to prevent violence, protect survivors, and hold offenders accountable. Find the flaws and places for development. (iii) Impact on Survivors: Research the effects of gender-based violence on survivors' health, mental state, and social lives in Pakistan. Their long-term mental and physical health and happiness must be investigated. Think about the stories of survivors from underrepresented groups. (iv) Education and Awareness: Research the works that discuss the effect of education on ending violence against women and advancing gender equality in Pakistan. Examine the current course load, pedagogy, and publicity initiatives. Find ways that inclusive gender education can be included in the existing curriculum at all grade levels. (v) Research Gaps and Future Directions: point out where the current literature falls short or where new avenues for exploration could be opened. Call attention to the need for research into new kinds of gender-based violence, the role of technology and social media, intersectional perspectives, and the assessment of solutions and policies.

Researchers can learn more about gender-based violence in Pakistan by reviewing the existing literature on the topic. This can help them fill in information gaps and provide a more complete picture of the issue.

## **3. Methodology**

The author employed qualitative approaches to learn more about how people perceive, consider, and discuss gender-based violence. Through interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations, talk to survivors, key players (including activists, lawmakers, and service providers), and members of the community. This data will help study cultural influences, obstacles, and survival stories.

Extensive case studies of incidents of gender-based violence are required to give rich contextual information and narratives. Medical and legal paperwork are reviewed, and interviews with patients and their loved ones are conducted. Case studies can help us understand the dynamics, ramifications, and institutional responses to gender-based violence. Examine Pakistan's policies and laws addressing gender-based violence. Determine the effectiveness of current legal frameworks, identify implementation gaps, and identify barriers to justice. Interviews with lawyers and policymakers, as well as document analysis, may be required.

## **4. Patriarchy**

The term "patriarchy" has been variously defined in feminist literature. Others use the term to refer to a social system of gender relations, with some emphasizing that the root of patriarchy is biological and arguing that it is a sexual system of power that depends on a male hierarchical ordering of society (Mitchell, 1974) and still others use the term to refer to a male ideology with a base in patriarchal structures (Hadi, 2017). According to Lerner, male supremacy is structural and institutionalized in many pillars of society. Patriarchy, as defined by Walby (1990), is a social system in which men hold power over women and treat them poorly or exploit them for their gain. She also identifies six structures of patriarchy: wage labour, domestic labor, sexuality culture, violence, and the state. The interplay between these elements gives rise to a wide range of manifestations of women's enslavement. Both institutionalized such as in bureaucracies, governments, laws, markets, and religions, and informal such as in interpersonal relationships patriarchal structures exist, according to Hunnicutt (2009). To explain men's persistent control in modern societies, feminist theorists coined and popularised the word "patriarchy." Patriarchal beliefs are engrained in Pakistani society, determining women's subservient position. Patriarchal control over women is carried out through established rigorous behavioral rules, gender segregation, and an ideology that equates family honor with female virtue. The aberrant, immoral, and harmful customary behaviors in Pakistan that attempt to maintain women's enslavement are defended and sanctified as cultural traditions and given religious sanction (Hadi, 2017). Despite their differences, all current feminist theories agree that patriarchy is a system of power relations founded on male supremacy. Many feminist theories center on the concept of patriarchy; this includes Radical Feminist, Marxist Feminist, and Socialist Feminist concepts, among others.

## **5. Gender-based Violence in Pakistan**

The author digs into various prevalent forms of violence against women in Pakistan, including honor killings, sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, and acid assaults. In the following discussion, these problems and the legal measures that the State of Pakistan has adopted are been thoroughly discussed.

### **5.1. Honor killing**

The female form is a symbol of family pride. To preserve this dignity, males believe they have the right to control the sexuality and lifestyle of women. Therefore, males limit women's autonomy in light of social and cultural norms aimed at safeguarding women's dignity. A man's honor is between a woman's legs, hence she must maintain her purity and chastity for the sake of his family's reputation.

A woman's participation in an extramarital affair not only violates the rights of others to their own body, but also threatens the established patriarchal social order. Whether or not a woman is guilty of having an extramarital affair is of little consequence in terms of honor. The public's opinion is what has the most impact on the man's reputation. Desecration of honor can be established with just hearsay or suspicion, necessitating corrective action. Only "blood washes honour," and if the lady has brought dishonor onto the family, then she must die. The definition of honour killing, as provided in Section 299 (ee) of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (PPC), is any crime that is perpetrated under the guise of karo kari, siyahkari, or any other comparable custom or practice.

Women are generally not given a chance to refute the accusations against them before their male relatives resort to murder to restore their dignity. This is a display of their authority over others to preserve their

reputation. In many cultures, murder committed for the sake of honour is not considered a crime, but rather a just and fitting retribution for those who have dared to insult or insult the honour of others (Dahiya, & Dahiya, 2012). Those who view this as a barbaric and cruel practice have been pushed to take the law into their own hands by public opinion and commentary on the honour problem. As a result, he has no choice except to murder the family matriarch. He not only protects his dignity by eliminating any threats but also spectacularly displays the strength of his manhood by doing so (Hongdao et al., 2018). A male is seen as "socially impotent" and "beghairat" (dishonourable) if he refuses to murder a lady who has shamed him or his family.

Patriarchal social norms and values in Pakistan provide the rationale for killing for honour. Men resort to honour killing when they believe their wives have brought shame and dishonour upon them by acting in ways that go against the traditional honour code. The murderer can atone for the 'stained' reputation he has sustained due to the woman's actions by eliminating her. The police, who share this view, tend to disregard honour killings as irrelevant domestic incidents (Ruane, 2000).

There is a good reason why some people refer to the industry in question as the "honour killing Industry." After numerous media reports detailed murders committed under the guise of honour killings, stakeholders such as members of the tribe, the police, and tribal mediators felt compelled to act. Evidence from fabricated honor-killing cases points to land disputes and the inability to pay back loans as possible motivations. Some men have even been known to kill a female relative under the guise of honor to frame a member of the debtor's family and get the loan written off as a result.

According to a study by Amnesty International from the year 2000, hundreds of women are slain in Pakistan each year in the name of Honor. Lahore is the second-largest city in Pakistan, and in 2000, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) released a study documenting at least 266 honour murders of women in and around the city. The province of Punjab is where most honour murders occur in Pakistan. About 672 women were murdered because of so-called honor crimes in the year 2000. Especially in the tribal regions of northern Pakistan, hundreds of honour murders may go undetected each year owing to societal connivance (HRCP, 2000a). According to research by HRCP, more than 3,000 women have been killed in Pakistan since 2008 due to their gender (2015). Honour murders have increased throughout time and have extended from their original rural and tribal settings to more modern metropolitan ones. Over a thousand women and girls were killed in Pakistan for the sake of honour in 2011, according to a poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Among many cases, a few were extensively reported. For example, in 2016, Qandeel Baloch, a Pakistani fashion model, was murdered by her brother. Following the model's death, lawmakers enacted an anti-honor killing laws with the catchy title "Anti-Honor Killing Law." As the offender's legal heirs were previously able to offer pardon, the parliament has partially closed this gap through legislation introducing new and harsh consequences. The storey of Shamsa, who was stoned to death by her uncle and family in the sake of honour, has just come to light. Her uncle took her dancing during her cousin's wedding, which is a common and traditional component of wedding ceremonies in Pakistan, and made it out to be an immoral and unethical conduct.

The survey indicated that more than 90% of Pakistani women have experienced some kind of domestic violence. Abuse within the home is often not reported in Pakistan because of the stigma attached to discussing personal matters.

## **6. Legal Measures**

Pakistan has put in place several legal measures to combat honor killings. The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) has been amended to offer a more rigorous legal framework for prosecuting people implicated in honor killings. The “Anti-Honor Killing Laws” (Criminal Amendment Bill) passed in 2016 further narrowed legal loopholes that had previously permitted perpetrators of honor killings to avoid punishment. Special courts have been established to expedite cases involving honor killings, to make sure trials are conducted in a timely and fair manner. Furthermore, Pakistan has implemented witness protection initiatives to encourage people to step out and testify against honor-killing criminals without fear of retaliation. To educate society about the serious effects of honor killings and to push for gender equality and women's rights, public awareness programs have been developed. Furthermore, the government works with NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to aid victims and survivors of honor killings by providing legal assistance, shelter, and counseling. These legal provisions are significant strides forward in Pakistan's attempts to eliminate honor murders and foster justice and gender equality, however, their effectiveness is dependent on strict implementation and a broader societal change away from the practice.

## **7. Sexual Harassment**

Harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity is commonly referred to as "sexual harassment." Sexual harassment primarily affects women. The majority of the responsibility rests on cultural and institutional reasons. First of all, men are taught to be sexually aggressive and to see women primarily as sexual objects in today's culture. Therefore, erotic topics often arise in talks between males and females. The second is structural. Because of the innate power balance between the sexes, sexual harassment of women is common in the workplace and schools (Jamshed, 2021). Sexual harassment occurs when a male superior or instructor makes unwanted sexual advances toward a female employee or student. These guys get that submissive women could feel unable to say no to sexual overtures for fear of reprisal, which could come in the form of a demotion, termination, or failing grade at work or school. The prevalence of sexual harassment is alarming in Pakistan. When women go out into public, they are typically the targets of men's voyeuristic, sexually-driven stares. Women in Pakistan experience sexual harassment everywhere they go, from their own homes and neighborhoods to public transportation, schools, businesses, and even shopping malls (Ali & Siddiqi, 2019).

### **7.1. Legal Measures**

Sexual harassment is defined in Section 509 of the Criminal Code. It broadens the term to include not just the workplace but also the house, the neighborhood, the bus, the market, and the park. Section 509 of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 provides for criminal penalties for sexual harassment, including imprisonment for up to three years and/or a fine of up to 500,000 Pakistani Rupees, or both. Pakistan has also put in place many other legal measures to combat sexual harassment, with an emphasis on the workplace and public settings. The “Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act” of 2010 is a landmark piece of legislation that requires organizations to form harassment committees and

ensure an organized and confidential mechanism for dealing with complaints. The Pakistan Penal Code makes sexual harassment and other forms of sexual assault illegal, providing a legal basis for punishing offenders. Importantly, firms must establish internal systems for reporting and processing sexual harassment allegations, thereby creating a safe climate for victims to come forward. These procedures also include precautions to protect victims' identities and privacy. The government, in collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organizations, conducts public awareness programs for educating the public about sexual harassment and individual rights, to build a culture of respect and gender equality. Victims are also given access to legal aid and support services to help them pursue legal action against criminals. The efficacy of these statutes is dependent on their meticulous implementation and the larger cultivation of a culture in Pakistani society that values respect and gender equality.

### **8. Rape and Sexual Assault**

Historically, rape and sexual assault have been the primary means of retaliation in patriarchal societies. However, one common fallacy about rape is that it is the fault of women who attract, agitate, or provoke men's sexual inclinations by dressing or acting provocatively among strangers or otherwise crossing the line of what is considered appropriate behavior among strangers. Crucial to the subjugation and submission of women was men's capacity to threaten and punish women sexually. Sexual violence should be seen as a kind of gender stratification because the underlying concept is one of power, not sex. According to certain feminist thinkers, men have historically used rape and the threat of rape to exert power over women (Whisnant, 2009).

There are two theories put out by sociologists to account explain sexual assault. Rape and sexual assault were also classified into structural and cultural categories, much like sexual harassment. They argue that rape is endemic because of three cultural beliefs: males should be sexually forceful or aggressive; women like being coerced into having sex; and women either beg for or deserve to be raped. When exposing the structural roots of rape, sociologists place special focus on the relevance of the power discrepancy between women and men. It is more likely that rape and other types of sexual violence against women will occur in a culture where men have the upper hand (Flood & Pease, 2009).

The fear of sexual assault has crippled many women economically because of the trauma and distress it causes them. Because of her anxiety, she may be forced to restrict her working hours and location, leaving her financially dependent on others. To put it another way, the mere threat of rape can restrict women's freedom of social contact, rob them of their right to self-determination, and make them dependent on men, who could then control them (Snoubar & Duman 2016). As do the refugees in the Middle East, some people occasionally marry their children to prevent them from being victims of rape and sexual harassment, which exacerbates the issue (Snoubar, 2016). Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that in 2014 alone, Pakistan was home to 828 rapes, 597 gang rapes, 597 rapes of women and girls, and 36 public strip rapes. A women's advocacy group in Pakistan reported 7,852 cases of violence against women in 2013 (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2021).

According to a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, the number of rape incidents is on the rise. It is estimated that every two hours, a woman is raped somewhere in Pakistan (HRCP, 2000b). Other studies have shown that the true numbers may be far higher, as many rapes and sexual assaults are not reported due to societal constraints. According to a compiled set of local media, over 300 separate

incidents of rape were recorded in Punjab in the first half of 2000 (Pande, 2002). HRCP (2000b) reports that gang rap has been increasingly popular over time. A study found that there were 212 gang rapes in 2016. From 2015 to 2020, there were over 22,000 reports of rape in Pakistan, or at least 11 every day. Only about 4,000 of these cases had made it to trial by the end of 2020. Increased reports of sexual assault may be traced back to patriarchal societies in which males have power over women.

### **8.1. Legal Measures**

Pakistan has implemented several legal steps to handle and combat rape incidents. The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) has explicit legal provisions that define and punish rape, as well as penalties and legal processes for prosecution. DNA evidence is increasingly being used in rape investigations and trials, helping to identify and punish rapists. The creation of rape crisis centers across the country offers survivors critical assistance, including medical care and counseling. Survivors are provided with legal aid services for them to acquire legal representation as well as help during the legal process. Pakistan has implemented legislative reforms to improve rape prosecution, changing legislation to provide better protection for survivors and harsher punishment for violators. To ensure that survivors receive justice as soon as possible, specialized courts and expedited processes have been designed to expedite rape cases. The government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society are initiating public education programs aimed at informing the public about consent, legal ramifications of rape, and victims' rights.

### **9. Domestic violence**

Women in Pakistan frequently faced and dealt with domestic violence in silence. Cases of domestic violence are rarely reported because of the stigma attached to speaking publicly about personal issues. Men believe it is their inherent right to use threats or actual violence against their spouses to teach them a lesson when their wives are acting in a disobedient manner. To paraphrase sociologist Gelles, "the most violent group in society" is the family, surpassing even the police and the military (quoted in Roesch, 1984:75). Abuse of one's position of authority in the home can take many forms, including physical violence, sexual assault, and psychological manipulation. Sadly, dowry violence and other forms of in-law abuse are all too typical for Pakistani women due to the prevalence of the extended family system.

Researchers in the field of sociology have found that both structural and cultural variables contribute to the prevalence of domestic violence. Women in Pakistan are structurally disadvantaged due to the country's dominant patriarchal social order. Gender-based violence, such as rape or domestic abuse, is more common against women because of their position as the submissive and subjugate gender in a patriarchal system. Social scientists use cultural explanations to debunk romantic relationship myths. Many men still hold the outdated view that their spouses should blindly follow their orders and that any sign of resistance gives them the "right" to physically punish their wives. As a result, this worldview encourages more males to physically abuse their partners.

Statistics suggest that over 80% of Pakistani women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence. Violence against women is typically linked to their economic dependence and lack of agency, and it is commonly used as a social weapon to maintain the existing gender-based social order. Repeated incidents of the stove being set on fire constitute the most severe type of domestic violence. It's not uncommon for husbands and in-laws to do such acts because they're unhappy with the dowry the victim



received or because of some other minor family disagreement. According to 1999 newspaper sources, around 201 Pakistani women were injured in the kitchen (UNICEF, 1999). About 206 women perished from burns sustained at stoves in only the year 2000 (Niaz, 2003). Stove explosion deaths are on the rise in Pakistan, according to a survey that estimates their frequency. Women in Pakistan who have been the victims of violence are less likely to seek treatment and less likely to talk about what they went through. Domestic violence was reported 608 times in 2009, according to national statistics. As reported by HRCP in 2020, over 90% of Pakistani women have faced domestic violence in their lifetime. Only 8,719 of the 52,370 cases reported in 2021 garnered media attention; approximately 27,273 of these cases involved violence against women. Domestic violence is underreported because of the prevalence of other violent crimes, such as murder and honour killing.

### **9.1. Legal Measures**

To address and eliminate domestic abuse, Pakistan has established a number of legal measures. The “Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act”, of 2020 is an important legal framework for preventing and responding to domestic violence. This statute gives survivors the ability to get protective orders against their abusers, providing their safety and relief. The Pakistan Penal Code has provisions that criminalize many forms of domestic violence, including physical, mental, and emotional abuse, and allow perpetrators to be prosecuted. In addition to legislative initiatives, the government and civil society organizations run public awareness and training programs to inform the public about domestic violence, its consequences, and survivors' rights. Pakistan also provides homes for homeless people and support services, providing survivors with a safe place as well as access to counseling and legal assistance. Women's Protection Cells have been established inside police agencies in various locations to handle domestic abuse cases gently and quickly.

### **10. Acid Attacks**

In Pakistan, acid attacks were common. As far as local culture goes, this was one of the harshest types of violence against women. It is considered a greater crime to throw acid than to kill someone. However, the use of acid as a weapon is on the rise in Pakistan (Ismail, 2023).

There were 1,485 reported occurrences of acid assaults in Pakistan between 2007 and 2022, as documented by the non-governmental organization Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF). Twenty of the 319 cases documented involved acid and thirteen (65.0%) of those were males.

Eleven assaults were precipitated by family or property issues, 5% by acts of revenge, and 4% by the end of a relationship. Three-quarters of these acid attacks on families involved children. The documented occurrences of acid assaults in Pakistan, which occur at a rate of 200 or more per year, have grown over the past year.

Official data do not reflect the reality on the ground, as the Smile Again Foundation stated in a statement and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan claimed that there are more than 400 victims of acid attacks each year.

Acid assaults are a common form of retaliation in various parts of South Asia against women who refuse marriage proposals or sexual advances. Acid attacks are commonly employed as a “punishment” for women who refuse to work to support their families.

## **12. Legal Measures**

Pakistan has put in place several legal provisions to deal with and eliminate acid attacks, protect survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable. The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) includes explicit legislative provisions that outlaw acid assaults, specifying penalties for perpetrators and the legal procedures required for prosecution. The “Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act”, of 2011, regulates the sale and purchase of acid and corrosive compounds, making it more difficult for potential attackers to have access to these harmful chemicals. The government has also tightened controls on acid sales, requiring customers to produce identity as well as acceptable justifications for buying.

In addition to these safeguards, Pakistan makes sure victims of acid attacks are compensated for medical bills and rehabilitation. Protection orders can be issued by courts to keep perpetrators away from survivors, lowering the danger of additional injury. The government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society use public awareness campaigns to teach the public about acid attacks, their consequences, and survivors' rights. Victims have access to rehabilitation services, including clinical therapies and psychological counseling to help them heal physically and psychologically.

## **13. Conclusion and Suggestions**

Gender-based violence is an outward sign of a more systemic problem: the patriarchal socioeconomic order. It is now understood that violence is the social mechanism by which men keep women in submissive roles. Feminist scholars have concluded that patriarchal culture is directly responsible for the prevalence of violence against women. Man-on-woman violence in Pakistan is best understood as a byproduct of patriarchy, which maintains women's subjugation by the establishment and regulation of their status and behavior according to predetermined social norms and ideals. Inherent patriarchal standards in Pakistan define the low position of women there.

The aberrant, immoral, and destructive customary practices that aim to perpetuate women's slavery, are defended and sanctified as cultural traditions and have religious overtones, which are one of the most pervasive components harming women's dignity and driving gender-based violence in Pakistan. When a woman's activities or behaviors are seen to constitute a threat to the patriarchal system, it is her body that should be punished. Beatings, fire, sexual impropriety, and even murder for the sake of honor are all instances of acceptable punishments. Violence against women is on the rise because of a flawed legal system that aims only to regulate women's behavior and conduct out of a patriarchal mentality (Qaisrani, Liaquat & Khokhar, 2016). Crimes committed by women are grossly underreported. Structures like a weak criminal justice system, women's lack of agency, and public apathy make it difficult for those seeking justice to obtain it. Most Pakistani women, however, just take it as part of life and don't speak out when they see or experience something wrong.

The male-dominated administration of the governmental apparatus has been connected to an increase in gender-based violence. When law enforcement is involved, the legal system fails to provide justice for

women, and there is a parallel informal justice system run by sexist tribal elders, women are more likely to be victims of violence without ever receiving justice.

Finally, via legal laws and efforts, Pakistan has made tremendous progress in recognizing and treating violence against women. Several key efforts must be taken to provide a truly safe environment for women. First and foremost, thorough enforcement of existing laws is critical, with a focus on quick investigation, prosecution, and consistent sanctions for offenders. Regular legal reform is required to keep legislation in line with international norms and to correct any gaps or deficiencies.

To fight established patriarchal beliefs and promote gender equality, regular awareness campaigns and education initiatives are critical. It is critical to expand and improve support services such as medical treatment, counseling, and shelters. Adequate training for law enforcement officers, as well as the formation of specialized groups, are required to handle situations compassionately and expeditiously. More stringent compliance with preventive measures, such as restrictions on the sale of hazardous drugs, can dramatically reduce violent episodes.

Collaboration among government institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and international partners is critical for resource sharing and the formulation of a comprehensive strategy. Finally, all programs must have a victim-centered approach to ensure victims are heard, valued, and encouraged in their pursuit of justice and rehabilitation. These collaborative efforts can help to create a more secure and egalitarian environment for women in Pakistan.

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