

HONOUR KILLING: A CANCEROUS PRACTICE

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As Indians, we have a thousand reasons to hold our heads high and a thousand reasons to be ashamed of. The World recognizes India as a civilized nation of rich culture and tradition. The evil and medieval practice of Honour Killing is still rampant here. At a time when human civilization is at the zenith of progress and innovation, innocent young couples are getting killed in the name of honour or for the sake of reputation of their family. The Human Rights constitutes Honour Killing as an act of vengeance, usually death, committed by family members of the couple, from any side as a response to the notion that the action of the girl or boy has tarnished the prestige of the family. The heinous crime usually happens when either a boy or a girl marries against the wishes of the family or when they defy arranged marriage.

Honour Killing is not only an atrocious crime but also a major threat to peace and harmony of the society. The perpetrator of the crime believes that the victim has brought shame upon the family by violating the principles of a religion or community. It annihilates the agency of women and reduces them to a mere symbol of prestige. It is well evident that a society which bars women from progress and restricts their freedom can certainly never prosper.

"Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights," says the former Secretary of the United States, Hilary Clinton.

It is a matter of grave concern that honour killings based on inter-caste and inter-religious marriages continue to take place in rural areas and they are mostly not reported because they get latent support among village residents.

In India, the largest number of Honour Killing has been reported from the northern states of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana. The



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recent case of Honour Killing in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra reveals that the menace of this barbaric practice is out of control in the state. The efforts put in by the government and civil society with much participation of the educated mass has resulted in favourable outcomes in controlling this menace. In the state of West Bengal, teachings of great sages, Swami Vivekananda, Ramkrishna Paramhans, Vidyasagar, and Ram-

mohan Roy have profound impact on the thought process of the people.

The odious practice of Honour Killing is a gross violation of Article 19 and 21, Fundamental Rights, which deal with Right to Freedom of speech and expression as well as Right to life and personal liberty. The Supreme Court amended Section 3 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1957, which argues that a citizen can be termed as major after the attain-

ment of 18 years of age by altering that 'a citizen attains maturity at the age of 21.' The Act further asserts clearly that the citizens are free to choose their life partners after the attainment of maturity age. Therefore, Honour Killing is the violation of this Act, as it victimizes the young men and women for choosing partners on their own accord.

It must be remembered that Honour Killing is an assault on women's autonomy. Hence the society needs strong acts and their implementation without any hesitation to counter the growing evil menace of Honour Killing. It is evident that a wide range of measures are needed to effectively combat such patriarchal crimes against love and women's autonomy in India.

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