

# Chapter 6

## Veils of Silence: The Hidden Scourge of Honor Killings in Pakistan

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Honor killings persist as a significant societal issue in Pakistan, reflecting complex intersections of culture, religion, law, and socio-economic factors. This chapter explores the diverse range of influences that contribute to the prevalence of honor killings within Pakistani society. By analyzing these factors, the chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of why and how honor killings occur, shedding light on both the structural and cultural dynamics that perpetuate this form of violence. The chapter examines the cultural and historical roots of honor killings in Pakistan. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing honor killings in Pakistan, offering a nuanced perspective on the cultural, religious, socio-economic, and legal dynamics that contribute to this form of violence. By elucidating these factors, the chapter contributes to broader discussions on gender-based violence, human rights, and the complexities of societal change in addressing harmful practices.*

Honor killing is a serious problem that has expanded around the world in the modern era and is not limited to any one area. Rather, it demands that international bodies make concerted efforts to eradicate this ubiquitous evil. It is a problem that affects 1/5 of the global population, the majority of which lives in South Asia. In this chapter we concentrate on Pakistan to determine the reasons behind honor

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-7240-1.ch006

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killings, the factors that contribute to the country's high honor killing rate, and the motivations behind those who actively engage in the practice.

## **STATISTICAL DATA OF HONOR KILLING IN PAKISTAN**

Pakistan has seen a troubling rise in honor killings in recent years, reflecting ongoing challenges despite various efforts to address the issue. In 2021, approximately 750 honor killings were reported, a figure that increased to around 800 in 2022. This rise was partly attributed to persistent socio-cultural norms and gaps in legal enforcement, despite some initiatives by NGOs and government bodies aimed at protecting women's rights (HRCP, 2022; UN Women, 2023). In 2023, the situation worsened with an estimated 850 honor killings, indicating that legal frameworks and advocacy efforts were not sufficiently addressing the root causes of violence (Amnesty International, 2024). Preliminary data for 2024 suggests a further increase to approximately 900 cases, driven by entrenched societal attitudes and inadequate legal protections (Human Rights Watch, 2024). This disturbing trend underscores the urgent need for more robust legal reforms, increased public awareness, and effective strategies to combat socio-cultural barriers to prevent further escalation of this severe human rights issue (HRCP, 2022; Amnesty International, 2024).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter uses a thorough and rigorous research technique to examine the various elements that contribute to honor killings in Pakistan. The study incorporates a wide range of data sources, such as in-depth interviews, newspaper and magazine analysis, and historical research from libraries. Carefully gathered main and secondary data provided a comprehensive picture of the problem. To achieve the study's goals, a qualitative research technique was carefully used, allowing for a thorough investigation of the complex elements that lead to honor killings. This strategy included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups to guarantee a range of viewpoints from different stakeholders, such as members of the community, law enforcement, legal professionals, and the relatives of the victims. Important demographic factors including gender, age, and ethnicity were taken into consideration to reduce bias and increase the findings' dependability. A detailed analysis of previously published works, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, and information from international entities were all included in the

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