



How can we stop 'Honor Killings'?

Description

What is a Honor Killing :-

- 'Honor killing' is the murder of a family member by other family members in the name of protecting 'honor'. Generally, young women are the victims. In most of the cases, the reasons are refusal for arranged marriage, marrying or being in relationship with the person outside their caste or religion & becoming a victim of rape.

Reasons for such heinous crimes :-

- The foremost reason is the patriarchal views on women. The orthodox notions that women and their choices should be in the control of family's head, mostly a man.
- The orthodox men and women, who put caste and religion before everything else.
- Lenient attitude of society towards honor killings.
- No recognition in law for honor killings. They are treated with the same law that deals with murders.
- High prevalence of khap panchayats.
- Some people consider honor killings as heroic.
- Politicians are not going against khap panchayats because they are a large vote bank.

Facts :-

- Honor killings are not just a problem of India, but of the world. They happen all over the world, especially in Middle eastern & South Asian countries.
- The prevalence of honor killings is high in North India compared to other parts of India, because of high prevalence of khap panchayats in north India.
- Families that commit crime do not just kill the girl, but also the boy that loves her.
- Most of the honor killing victims are Dalits.
- Lesbians and Gays are also targeted in the name of honor.
- Instead of killing, some families will force the victim to suicide.

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- Many of honor killings are falsely reported by their families as suicides & accidents.
 - In the record of 'National Crime Records Bureau', honor killings do not exist, because it is not recognized as a separate crime.
 - In most parts of India, hypergamy is accepted but hypogamy is not tolerated. That means upper caste man can marry lowest cast woman, but lower caste man is not allowed to marry upper caste woman.
 - Honor killing is considered as a socially sanctioned crime.
 - Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages will help in destroying the caste system and strengthens democracy.

What Indian govt is doing :-

- In 2006, Supreme court ordered stern action against all those threatening and harassing couples in the name of honor.
- Though the honor killings are happening from very long ago, it's only in 2009, parliament spoke the issue of honor killings and supported the demand for a separate law.
- In a Landmark judgement in the year 2010, Karnal district court ordered death penalty to five members of the family that committed the crime and a life imprisonment to the Khap panchayat chief that perpetrated the incident.
- In 2011, Supreme court ruled that honor killings comes under 'rarest of rare' category that deserve death penalty.
- 'National Commission for Women' (NCW) is working hard to stop honor killings. It's efforts significantly reduced the crimes.
- Prohibition of unlawful assembly (Interference withy the freedom of Matrimonial alliances) Bill, 2011 sought to declare khap panchayats as unlawful and mentions measures to prevent honor killings. This bill is supported only by 23 states and is still pending.
- The opponents of this law say that the law will be misused.

What more needs to be done :-

- Separate Law on honor killings is needed to punish the criminals and to rehabilitate and support the affected family.
- Law should include the issue of harassment faced by the young couple that decides to marry against the wishes of their families.
- Couples that have threat from their families need to be given legal protection.
- Criminals must be punished severely to send a strong message to all.
- Statistics need to be collected to study, analyze and to decide the steps to take.

Situation in other countries :-

- Turkey imposes life imprisonment for the guilty, if proved.
- Some countries allow the victim's family to forgive the killer. There are a few exceptions though.
- In ancient times, Rome and in some other countries men are allowed kill their wife and children, if they dishonor the family. At present, all the countries banned those barbaric laws.
- In most of the countries, honor killings are not recognized as a separate crime, and hence

no statistics are available.

Conclusion :-

Eliminating honor killings needs multi-dimensional approach. That means, on one side we should work on changing the attitudes of patriarchal men and women. On the other side, government should bring a separate law to prevent honor killings and to declare khap panchayats as unlawful. We should pressurize politicians to withdraw their support to khap panchayats.

Afterwords :- What is your opinion on this topic. Express you thoughts in the comment section below.

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