

Honour Killing in Pakistan: A Case Study of Qandeel Baloch

Umm-e-Habiba

Abstract—Honour killing- a form of gender violence is perceived as darker side of culture in many societies. Usually, religious radicalism or social backwardness is considered basic factor behind honour killings. However, to analyze underlying causes of such social action; it is essential to understand the respective cultural context, its diversities or peculiarities where such incidents occur. The empirical analysis of Qandeel Baloch's case study deciphers the cultural dynamics of female honour killing from the lenses of Pakistan's traditional Punjabi society. The research further highlights that how blend of fast pace social media communication channels and slow paced social change impacts individuals' mutual relationship in a closely-knitted traditional society.

Index Terms— Culture, gender, honour killing, media.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, killing of females by their male family members in the name of honour is a well-known phenomenon. Although reasons vary from context to context, one common aspect between all such murders is critical i.e. individuals who do so are mostly found as one of the nearest male relation to the victim. One recent case of honour killing in Pakistan was of Qandeel Baloch- a young model, actor, singer, social media sensation and self-proclaimed women activist, murdered by her younger brother-Waseem (allegedly, with assistance of his male cousins). Qandeel used to post her pictures and videos on her social media accounts which can be considered very 'explicit' from Pakistani cultural standards. She also earned fame via her 'involvement' with renowned religious figure i.e. *Mufti* Abdul Qavi. Moreover, allegedly, from time to time, she also tried to associate herself with political and/or social figures such as, Imran Khan and cricketer Shahid Afridi.

Although I value ethical and moral values associated with the human life and individual liberty, my focus to understand her killing would remain apart from philanthropist concerns. I would try to highlight the social and cultural structure which forced the murderer for his action, purely, for the sake of understanding the phenomenon of honour killing, in this case in Southern Punjab, and Pakistani society's reaction to it.

The paper, therefore, would present a brief description of Baloch's case study to define the focal point and the framework of this research, and then would try to address the

following questions:

Why her close relation i.e. her brother was forced to murder her? How did a patriarchal Pakistani society react to her murder?

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BALOCH'S CASE STUDY

Ms. Fauzia Azeem popularly known as Qandeel Baloch was a 26-year-old, model, social media sensation and self-proclaimed feminist who belonged to the village Shah Saddardin in Dera Ghazi Khan District of South Punjab (about 130 km away from Multan) [1]. Media reports revealed that she had an unsuccessful marriage and a child too. She was popular for posting her blunt and bold pictures, videos and statements on her social media accounts. Such style not only bought her extra-ordinary media attention but over 700,000 fan following [2].

On July 16, 2016, she was at her Multan residence to visit her ill father and celebrate the festival of *Eid-ul Fitr* with parents, when allegedly, her younger brother strangled her to death [3], [4]. The incident which created real hype before her death was her blunt selfies and consequent scandal with a cleric *Mufti* Abdul Qavi. Coincidentally, the cleric also belongs to Qandeel's native town. This led to a series of media interviews and talk shows which invited either her or the *Mufti* and sometimes both of them together to discuss the selfie scandal and describe their 'case' for public information.

Against the backdrop of aforementioned events, almost three weeks before her death, images of Qandeel's passport, National Identity Card and other information got viral on social media. Consequently, she held a press conference and told the media that she had been receiving life threatening phone calls. She stated that she had written the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the Interior Ministry officials to provide her security. However, later it was proved that she rightly mentioned that no helpful response was provided by them.

In the meanwhile, when she was 'enjoying' peak of media attention her ex-husband also came forward and got fame by 'exposing' her past and expressing his disapproval of her [5]. Although Qandeel had already hinted to move abroad, perhaps, for possible role in the "Big Boss 10" [6]. It was after those life threats that she reiterated her intentions [7].

After her murder, her parents accused in a media interview conducted by the 24NEWSHD that it was the situation which arose after her involvement with the *Mufti* Qavi which paved her way fast towards her unnatural death track. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Co6RamOxDa4>). Reportedly, her brother went to meet her at night and strangled

Manuscript received May 30, 2018; revised August 23, 2018.

UMM-E-HABIBA is with the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan (email: habiba@student.qau.edu.pk)

her to death. During the initial stage of investigation, the murderer accepted charges and said he did the murder in name of his family's honour. The murderer was presented by the Police in live press conference and media personnel were allowed to cross-question him (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcI3h0stYUA>). Few days after initial investigation, the murderer named some of his male cousins as his accomplices [8].

III. BRIEF REVIEW OF ACADEMIC LITERATURE RELATING TO THE PHENOMENON OF HONOUR KILLING

Before discussing Baloch's case further, it is also essential to briefly review the academic works which have covered the phenomenon of honour killing in various contexts. Plethora of literature is available on honour killings in general and honour killings specifically within Pakistan. The major themes which are common in the relevant literature will be discussed briefly.

Firstly, many journalistic or NGO lead inquiries of honour killings have developed literature with shades of philanthropist concerns, such as, the BBC documentaries broadcasted in the December 2016.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXVok0E5jTI&t=16s>)

Hence, they have provided judgmental analysis considering honour killing as a barbaric activity of 'uncivilized' cultures/people. This theme is very much connected to the thinkers who have explained honour killings from liberalist approach. For, in such inquires honour killing is treated either as a product or an import from some culture/society which somehow is backward. Therefore, this literature approach to study the phenomenon of honour killing has very rare possibility of impartial outcomes. A core assumption always exists which considers the killings a stigma associated with the 'others'. Broadly, such approaches which relate the phenomenon either with some specific culture or some cultural aspect (religion, patriarchy etc.) only present half-truth.

This approach may serve the normative and humanistic concerns but do not provide an in-depth analysis of those factors which provoke closely bonded blood relations to take such extreme decision? Moreover, to mark some specific culture as barbaric, backward or uncivilized can be a normative and macrolevel explanation but it cannot provide a logical answer that why do such practices exist unevenly across the globe and among various cultures. Plethora of Qandeel specific literature which toes the same line is also available. Such as, many media columns, programs or documentaries to which I refer in the research are part of this theme. However, an academic inquiry which could conceptualize and illustrate the phenomena in her native cultural context is missing.

The second theme in the literature has focused the honour killings from the legal perspective of rape, sexuality, and evidence related issues. For instance, Vaneesa Martin seeks to demonstrate that modernizing legal reforms is not enough unless the whole spirit of the society changes in which legal reforms are intended. She asserts that religion, customs, norms and laws all being aspect of culture are intermingled aspects of a society. And, ideally, the change to one should be the

change to all. However, the change to all simultaneously is not possible. Highlighting the case of Bibi Asilu, she covered the gaps between theory and practice of Muslim Law. However, her findings somewhat correlate to the idea that most cases of honour killings are predominantly based on rumours and the killer (family/relative) neither bother nor have the means to gather evidence which could prove that the murdered really was 'involved' [9].

Tahir Haider Wasti's work can also be categorized in this theme. The author has argued that it was the Indian Penal Code (IPC) drafted by colonial regime in 1860 which gave 'audacity' to the people to commit honour killings and enjoy leniency from the Court of Law and the Pakistani State toed the 'same line' when it invoked a new law in the 1990. The framers of IPC "justified their indulgence in the treatment of the offence, committed in the vindication of honour, not because of showing respect to the law operating in the region earlier, neither in the consideration of the local culture but showed their respect to the universally accepted norms." Although the framers of IPC were in favour of punishing such men in order to teach them respect for human life and govern their passions, they did not consider such men to be charged with attempted murder. Similarly, the law passed by the Pakistani State in 1990, "the offence of murder was not defined as a crime against the legal order of the State but as against the legal heirs of the victim. Since in most honour related crimes the women are killed by their own family members, the new law provided a virtual immunity to the culprits of honour killings". [10] His research also throws some light on the fact that it is the misinterpretation and misapplication of Sharia which links honour killing with religion.

It is worth mentioning that three months after Qandeel's murder, Pakistan's Parliament unanimously passed legislation which approved the new anti-honor killing law, removing a loophole in existing law that allows killers to walk free after being pardoned by family members [11].

The third theme relies upon specific cultural and contextual lenses to understand honour killings. This theme is followed by many scholars in various cultural contexts. This paper will focus upon the Indian, Arabian context, Pakistani, and immigrants' (to the West) cultural context.

Beginning from the Indian context, Dipankar Gupta's work is significant. He has explained how social and inbuilt prejudice among human beings, clans, castes and their intention to be seemed as civilized are quasi-contradictory conceptions of human society. He borrowed the concept of Ernest Gellner's "tyranny of cousins" to explain the severe consequences of endogamy in general but specifically, among castes of Jats and Gujjars of West Uttar Pradesh (UP) and East Haryana. Referring specifically, to the regions of West UP, East Haryana, including the South of Delhi, he argued that laws are bent or moulded in the Indian State to nourish the societal prejudices. Moreover, he has argued that the phenomenon of clan-based honour killing (occurred in the aftermath of marrying with in a clan, which is popularly called "khap") should be understood differently from caste, religion or status based cases of honour killing. Clan based honour killings are open, more explicitly owned by the murderers and

done without any considerations of hiding the deed or considering the rule of law. Because the underlying factor is collective cultural believe that marrying within clan is a sort of sibling incest and such a sin can be penanced and washed away only by death. Because here caste, social status or positions have not been undermined but nature itself has been challenged. The author further argued that Indian law enforcement bodies and elected governments prefer not to take a vivid stance on such killings. For, he believes that they themselves consider it as a private matter of family, or, to be more precise, they themselves being part of society, inwardly, consider the act of such killing somewhat legitimate. "Legally, an 'honour killing' would be a penal crime and there are no two ways about it. Yet, when clans authorize it, and the family acquiesces in it, our law enforcers find it difficult to act." Thus, an undeclared community support for honour killers exists. In case of other forms of honour killing the killers try to opt a covert revenge against the deviant. [12]

Similarly, Fadia Faqir via Jordan's case study demonstrated the Arabian cultural norms which consider the female sexual behaviour and purity directly related to the patrilineal family honour. Virginity of unmarried and chastity of married daughters is a source of honour for family. Role of victims' reputation and rumours in honour killing is the predominant factor in Jordan's culture where it is the reputation of a female which decides her fate. Fadia also highlighted the role of females in spreading the rumours and in certain cases it's the female members of family who provoke males and demand the killing of the deviant. For instance, "In many cases, women members of the family are the ones who put pressure on male members to kill other female members who are seen to be unchaste." She highlighted in her work that if a girl challenges society, her other sisters are considered unmarriageable throughout their lives and people challenge manliness of such girls' male relations. Those factors build a pressure on murderer. Sometimes, it is society that forces murderers to do so, because the society neither forgets nor forgive. "Sometimes, there are two victims-the murdered and the murderer." She has also discussed Jordanian law, Islamic and tribal law with relevance to violence against women and its societal motives embedded in the notion of honour which is divided along feminine and masculine lines, with different meanings for each gender. [13]

Next in the theme is Mikael Kurkiala who has deconstructed the honour killing via cultural study of the Turkish-Kurds immigrants in Sweden. He highlighted underlying factors of Kurdish cultural forces which worked in the killings of Fadime Sahindal. He has illustrated that if a female avoids to observe the rules set down by her cultural community, her "immoral behaviour" becomes a source of contamination for whole family. If all approaches to make such woman comply fail, the only remedy left to protect and revive family's honour is her murder. Thus, such murders are "culturally sanctioned" and designed to intact a moral order in society. [14]

Interestingly, his case study of Fadime Sahindal has some commonalities with Baloch's case. The victim -Sahindal was a student of sociology who secured media attention as a celebrity. Like Baloch, she also perceived herself as girl power

and expressed her concerns for girls of her community (immigrant females). She publicly, owned her family's rebuke and disapproval of herself, and expressed that her family could murder her; which eventually, happened. She had also decided to go off the scene, i.e. to go abroad. However, unlike Qandeel, her purpose was to do a field trip neither showbiz employment nor migration.

Now switching towards cultural context of Pakistan two more works would be shared. The first is of Magnus Marsden. Although the main theme of his work revolves around societal concerns regarding the emotions of love, romance sexuality, and elopement marriages in the Northern Pakistan, specifically, Chitral. By highlighting the issue of high suicidal rate in the region the author has provided some insight to the societal behaviour vis-à-vis honour killing. Such suicidal deaths, reportedly, are believed to be honour killings- a possible response to elopement marriages. Somehow many natives believe that such death-cum-honour killings are either presented as suicides or the girls' parents 'use' them to portray that the bridegroom himself killed the bride (their daughter). By doing so they perceive that they not only 'restore' their family honour but also put the 'reason' of family's defamiation in trouble. However, this line of argument too does not provide much insight to understand the phenomenon of honour killing at large. [15]

The second work which provides adequate understanding of cultural context is of Anjum Alvi. Alvi's theory of "concealment and revealment" explored Punjabi society to understand the phenomenon of female veiling. I will rely heavily on her theme to provide a theoretical underpinning to my argument. Gist of her argument can be summed up by considering culture a jigsaw puzzle. As, one can never understand whole picture without placing all pieces of puzzle in order, same rule applies to culture. The minute aspects of culture are impossible to be understood randomly by non-natives. Unless, they would relate it to the broader cultural context in which that aspect is followed by the natives.

Alvi has argued that phenomenon of Muslim females' veiling is generally considered a symbol of suppression and patriarchy by many outsiders. However, understanding of broader cultural context will provide insight to the researchers that native females do not consider veil as a suppression marker. For natives; veil is neither merely a dress code nor merely a fashion or religious obligation. Instead, it is expression of their honour and reflection of association with one aspect of their larger cultural value i.e. concealment. Female veil reflects a culturally specific relation of a female socialized to deal with the world in a peculiar way. Veil enables her to move and enjoy freely in a patriarchal domain which otherwise is refrained from her by the societal norms. So, veil is not a suppressing tool of patriarchy but a female strategy to counter those suppressing norms. She refers contented issues, such as, honour-killings as dark side of the concealment culture (veiling), i.e. "unintended consequences" of a value. However, this darker dimension per se stems from a culture of concealment which is very much associated with the notion of honour. [16]

The above-mentioned cases highlight the issue of honour

killing in various contexts. The analysis of Baloch's case, from cultural perspective, would add to the cultural and structural dimension of literature available upon honour killing and highlight sense of overarching collectiveness in Punjab's culture. Borrowing from Alvi, I would argue upon the line that the revelation of a family's inner world to outsiders, in form of their females' contact/relation with outside world and spread of such relationship (be it reality or only a rumour), makes the family nude, i.e. puts it in an unbearable feeling of shame and disgrace. To cover the nakedness and to remedy that stigma of disgrace; hence, resuscitate the family's honour and culturally acceptable state i.e. concealment, the "unintended consequences" are desired, demanded and fuelled by cultural norms. Although in a varying degree, but those norms are shared by all members of that culture irrespective of their gender. The pressure generated by such norms intensely commands, strengthen, shape and regulate humans' individual and collective behaviour.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

I have relied upon the aforementioned data available on honour-killing provided by different authors regarding various societies. Moreover, to understand the cultural dynamics of traditional society of South Punjab and underlying factors of Baloch's honour killing I also did a small-scale fieldwork. I met off and on and interviewed two groups of people.

In group A there were four persons who belong to Qandeel's native town -Shah Saddardin. My respondents were co-players (of volleyball) with the murderer (Waseem) during his early and mid-teens. Currently, one¹ of them is employed as labour to a contractor and part-time rickshaw driver, two of them are rickshaw drivers in Rawalpindi Cantonment and their fourth fellow is employed as labour in the UAE.

In group B there were seven males and nine females of Northern Punjab (mainly of Rawalpindi; as also of Islamabad). All of them are university graduates; few are still pursuing their post-graduate degrees and rest of them are employed in public or private sector. (Two are from Bahria University Islamabad, two are from Allama Iqbal Open University, one from the Fatima Jinnah Women University, one from the Preston University Islamabad and rest from Quaid-i-Azam

¹ This person, is my major source for organizing the Group A. He arranged my meetings with the other two rickshaw drivers and skype-call with the one who lives in the UAE. He has not only remained involved in the construction work at my own home but also with my next-door neighbours. For over four years, he has been living at my residence, initially due to his job, and later, due to philanthropist concerns of my father. Therefore, he has not only frank relation with my brothers and father who chat with him by calling his nick name-Malangi Sahib, but well acquainted to me also. While responding to a question during the interview he explained that, although being a social media user he was aware of Qandeel Baloch when she got media attention due to her explicit offers for Imran Khan and Shahid Afridi, it was his gossip with his other three friends over 'selfie scandal with the cleric' when he realized that the model Qandeel was in fact, one of Waseem's sister- "the one who had eloped after her divorce" as he mentioned.

University Islamabad.

Moreover, masses' responses available on Baloch's social media accounts and other websites regarding her status updates, murder and brother's action constructs the group C which has been compiled by the author (follow Table: 1 and Baloch's Twitter account). As the group belongs to cyberspace, the background of its respondents is almost impossible to trace. Therefore, the group C can be labelled as a mix of urban and rural population. Moreover, the respondents of this group are not limited to Pakistan. Hence, their responses represent the global community.

In addition to that, as primary sources I have relied upon Qandeel Baloch's, media statements available in form of her interviews/talk shows and/or press conferences in print and electronic media (such as, her social media account² and Dailymotion or YouTube mainly). My research approach has remained largely hermeneutical with use of inductive research methodology.

V. ANALYSIS OF QANDEEL BALOCH'S SELF-CONSTRUCTED SKETCH

Analysing her social media accounts and recorded statements it is not difficult to understand that Qandeel Baloch was a victim of patriarchal societal structure and norms, thus, a staunch critic of it. She often used to call herself "one-woman army" in her social media statuses and proclaimed to be a symbol of woman power who managed to survive despite multiple structural hurdles to independent female survival. For this, she alleged her family too who imposed a marriage upon her and did not pay any heed to her denial to be engaged into the wedlock. While commenting upon her failed marriage and relationship with her former husband she stated:

"My family never supported me. I would say I don't want to live with him, but they didn't support me. That man tried to throw acid on me. He said 'I'll burn your face because you're so beautiful'. And today the media isn't giving me any credit for speaking about empowerment of women, girl power. They don't recognize that this girl fought. Today I am capable of taking on the burden of an entire household. But no one gives me credit for that." [17].

She acknowledged that the struggle for survival was neither easy nor a happy experience. As her status updates of Twitter July 14, 2016, states:

"As a women we must stand up for ourselves...As a women we must stand up for each other...As a women we must stand...Life has taught me lessons in a early age...My Journey from a girl to a SELF DEPENDENT WOMEN was not easy..."

She further mentioned that she survived at her own and while struggling for survival she sacrificed her child too. An act never easy for a traditional Pakistani mother; no matter how realistic her approach towards life would be. "Then when my family didn't support me, I ran away and found support in Darul Aman. That was my right. I didn't know what I would do

² Although her Facebook Account has been removed by the administration of the website, her Twitter account profile can be accessed at <https://twitter.com/qandeelquebee>

ahead. It was in Multan. The child was with me. I had kept him with me because he was really young. He fell ill in Darul Aman. He was so sick, everyone told me that I should give him back to his father, that if anything happened to him, God forbid, they would do a case on me. I had to give my son back to them. After that, I was discharged from there. I thought now I am capable of doing this on my own. I did a job, I completed my Matric and my Bachelors. I did a marketing job, I worked as a bus hostess, I did a lot of jobs, I struggled a lot. I got out from there. The first thing I did when I got out of Darul Aman was my Matric. Then I did my Bachelors privately, I kept doing it. I did quite few jobs, in Daewoo, in Lever Brothers. Quite a few jobs. Then after a while, I started working in showbiz. It was about 2012, 2013. I started from zero. Small fashion shows, small photoshoots. I've seen a lot. I've seen a lot of things up close." [18].

It seems that Qandeel's reaction against her victimization by the patriarchal nature of society came forward in her pro-feminist stance, which was very much evident in her tweets and Facebook statuses. Few days before her murder, she responded in an interview "I don't know HOW many girls have felt support through my persona. I'm a girl power. So many girls tell me I'm a girl power, and yes, I am. I was 17 years old when my parents forced an uneducated man on me. The abuse I have been through... It happens in places like this, in small villages, in Baloch families. This happened to me too I said, 'No, I don't want to spend my life this way'. I was not made for this." [19].

No matter, as an individual Qandeel really struggled to stretch the patriarchal cultural borders and transcend the boundaries of her rural roots, but, as a member of traditional society neither she nor her family could overcome certain social barriers. Economically, she became successful, for, she not only improved her life style and standard but of her family's also. However, socially, neither could she change her past and rural background nor could alter her family's social circle/gatherings and social bonding.

The cohesive ties of social networks and kinship bonding-an integral characteristic of traditional society like Southern Punjab was a cultural barrier which was beyond her control. Thus, it became the gap which she could not fill. Nor, because she lacked the will but because she lacked power and capacity required to fill it. This very gap created the rift i.e. "dishonour of family name" between herself and her brother which proved out to be critical for both.

VI. PUTTING SELF IN THE MURDERER'S SHOES

My understanding of the phenomenon of murder and instincts behind the murder are that it was the societal pressure coupled with influence of rumour ignited by the media which forced the murderer to take that extreme initiative. In a closely knitted society where social relations recall even male members of a family not simply using their first names (thus, not considering them as individual entity) but by referring their relations vis-à-vis their family members, such as, his brother, his son, it was almost impossible that such bold independence and 'inviting moves' of a female could have

remained unnoticed. Because the pressure of her social actions were not to be borne by herself only but her family members too. As mother of the murdered said:

"He killed my daughter after being taunted by his friends. They would infuriate him and tell him she is bringing you dishonour" [20].

The first blow to the social network of the murderer came when he was a school going boy (student of grade 8th or 9th) who used to look after his general store in late noon hours till the dusk; narrated by the group A respondents. However, when Qandeel left home, in its aftermath, he avoided social gatherings and public areas where chances of social interactions were fairly high. For instance, the group A informed that he not only left his school forever, but also suspended playing volleyball matches with his co-players and his economic activity on general store, which he did not resume till seven weeks or so.

I wondered if the issue was patriarchy oriented male reaction only, then, why did her father not respond the same way? He was not critic of her activities and behaved altogether different from his son. Interestingly, during his media statements after her death, the father has metaphorically associated his daughter with (former Prime Minister) Benazir Bhutto. He stated: "We are hopeful that the world will remember her -- that Pakistan will remember her, like they do Benazir Bhutto" [21]. Besides, father also mentioned that his daughter wanted to join politics in his interview to the ARYNews on July 17, 2016. Therefore, it needs to be mentioned that it was not merely the oppressing overarching patriarchal structure which provoked the brother in a particular way. In fact, it was gossips, rumour and taunts against her intensified by the media which (includes both genders not only men) provoked him. The killer perceived all such mocking not a dishonour to her only but for his family's name also. As he replied during the live cross questioning allowed in Press Conference of the CPO Multan (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcI3h0stYUA>) by media personnel:

"motive (of the killing) was that she was uploading explicit videos on her Facebook account, we are Baloch and we cannot bear such stuff." (Translated).

When the accused was asked that his sister had remained active on social media, for many years, why he took this step at a certain point of time, he responded that--there were many other issues too. During the same press conference, he stated that after her scandal with the *Mufti* media dared to come to his home which did not happen earlier. When she created that situation, I terminated her because she was the reason. (Translated).

Knowing that the press conference was broadcasted live on all media channels, he further stated that he had no regrets over his deed.

"I have no regrets at all, we are Baloch,...the reason I have told you already, I could not bear her actions anymore, that's it." (Translated).

In order to wash away the stain Qandeel had brought to the family honour was the major reason which provoked the brother to plan and execute the murder. Moreover, the different response of brother and father seems somewhat comprehensible, if analysed from another perspective i.e. their

age group. The fact that neither her father belongs to that age group who have expertise and/or interest in the use of social media applications, nor his social gatherings/circle can be considered as much enthusiastic to respond via (gossips and mocking) to such bold videos/pictures the way young blood could be has due weightage. Therefore, despite being a male member of patriarchal societal structure the father lamented the loss of his “brave” daughter; his tone and response regarding his daughter was much more sympathetic as expressed in the post-Qandeel press statement to media. [22]. Father’s legal action against his son apparently seems somewhat rational and legitimate to the outsiders who do not understand the dynamics of that traditional society. However, for those who belong to that very society have labelled it as a devastating and emotional act of him during author’s interview of the group A.

“By legal prosecution he is doing a useless effort. For us, having such a female is dishonour to family. We do not allow our young females to open door when the doorbell rings. How could we allow a female of such social background, to be audacious enough to bring such filth to our name? Her audacity will encourage our other females too.” Responded a group A member to the author. (Translated).

Another group A member stated: “in case any female elopes it is brother’s responsibility not father’s; to kill her and restore the honour. To do the killing, the brother would suspend his all social and economic activities. In case, the eloper’s brother is far away or does not exist at all, then, her parental uncles would do the job.” (Translated).

In response to a question one respondent reasoned that he perceives the father’s act of FIR registration against his son as an emotional response. The second respondent almost indicated same thinking pattern:

“If he would forgive the murderer, he would do good to himself. His breadwinning daughter has gone. Now, he would lose his son too.” (Translated).

The fact aforementioned by the one of the respondents that in case of brother’s absence or nonexistence, it is the paternal uncle(s) who would be responsible for ‘revival’ of family honour, impelled me to ask him why had he only mentioned paternal, why not maternal uncle(s). His reply (endorsed by other respondents too) gave me another insight of their cultural structure, that its only patrilineal family whose honour comes at stake, in such cases.

“This is not maternal family’s responsibility at all.” (Translated).

The prompt and clear answer further clarifies the argument that it is not merely, patriarchy in general which provokes the men to do such act. But even, within patriarchal structures different male relations are supposed to behave differently. Probably, this answer also throws some light on the aforementioned argument about the father’s behaviour and somewhat explains that why her ex-husband came forward on media and expressed his disgust against and ‘otherness’ from her³ [23].

³ In addition to that, it can be the case that ex-husband might had enjoyed some ‘material’ dividends too for his media appearance on a

Like Qandeel, the murderer-Waseem was also unable to alter the cultural structure. Apparently, he seems as the main actor in her killing, however, he was also chained by that very culture. Thus, he too was merely another actor compelled by a greater cultural structure. A structure whose norms and values developed and shaped over centuries demands them to perform their ‘moral duty’ imposed upon them by their cultural norms.

In a traditional rural society like South Punjab, where a culture of female covering, shame and concealment prevails. Qandeel was not perceived as an independent individual but only a part of her close relations i.e. family. In closely knitted web of relations, her openness and boldness was also interpreted in collective terms. Therefore, her actions were considered breach of cultural and traditional norms which could have devastating impact on social networking/bonding of her family. Subsequently, the brother found it difficult to cope with that overarching structural pressure. Eventually, he tried to revive the family honour i.e. concealed status of their family by their act of killing.

Although like the other family members the murderer was economically dependent upon her too. His declining social life and increasing societal pressure upon him provoked him to restore the family ‘honour’ via every possible measure. Furthermore, it can be assessed that the social structure neither impedes social circle of all males connected to such ‘deviant lady’, as Qandeel turned out to be, nor it exerts pressure upon all of them equally. Thus, to handle this pressure and to ‘remove’ the disgrace she subscribed to her family name and ‘revive’ the honour is foremost responsibility of brother(s) or patrilineal relations only.

VII. THE DIVIDED AND ‘MIXED’ REACTION OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY VIS-À-VIS HER MURDER

The Pakistani society in general and youth in specific, used to react vigorously upon her blunt style and reacted so upon her murder too. Largely, their concerns remained varied between a range of highly negative to highly sympathetic responses. Predominantly, people who used to criticize her ‘social media activities’ responded to her killing from philanthropist concerns. Despite the fact that her fan following was in millions who used to like and share her social media activities, many of the Group C members considered her disgusting (Table: 1). But, simultaneously, responses of the group B and C indicates the same society which was sympathetic to her was sympathetic to her brother too.

Interestingly, if we consider the response from the lenses of gender, (both group B and C) indicate that the ratio of female respondents who were sympathetic towards her was higher than the males. (follow table:1 comment: 7-12).

Their reaction per se indicates general frustration among females regarding the patriarchal nature and context of Pakistani culture. However, it is also evident that many female

specific time. As in the commercialized age, neither media allows anyone to ‘enjoy’ media airtime for ‘free’, nor it broadcasts news which could not buy it some ‘rating’ and/or sponsorship.

respondents were in favour of the brother and critic of her, nevertheless, they criticized the patriarchal nature of the system more. Probably, they followed a dichotomist approach. On one hand, they sympathized for her tragic end and on the other hand, they were critical of her social actions. Although many male respondents of the group B and C sided with her too, they never forgot to mention the societal pressure and impacts of gossips upon her brother as a legitimate reason for his action. The group B members acknowledged that “immense and overarching social pressure” could not be handled by many of them too, if they were to face the same situation. (also follow Table 1: comment 6 to understand the group C response).

Table:1 illustrates well how the society expressed its views regarding her and her killing. Such a ‘mixed’ response generates from the fact that even a larger chunk of Pakistani society which ‘masked’ its emotions under philanthropism considers the act of brother somewhat legitimate. It is therefore, not difficult to assess that the cultural norms and values of the society indicate a ‘collective consensus’ over such cases. And, the phenomenon of honour killing (be it of Qandeel Baloch’s or any other) cannot be understood without analysing the cultural dynamics behind it.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From culture oriented analytical perspective, Qandeel Baloch’s honour killing at the hands of her brother and the subsequent divided response of the masses highlights a darker side of the social cohesiveness and integrity of the Punjabi culture. It also illustrates the inability of the traditional societal pattern to view/consider individuals’ values, honour, and actions separately and independently. In such a cultural pattern, it is not individual but his/her bonding with some larger social entity such as, clan (*briadri*) or family etc. which is more significant. Hence, the burden of social actions of one individual is supposed to be borne by the family as whole.

Although the purpose of this writing is purely academic and merely understanding of the phenomenon, not to target/accuse any individual, institution or culture. The analysis of this social phenomenon indicates that the media was the most decisive factor in her killing. The immense media response (be it electronic, social or print) to her actions prompted her brother for her murder and also shaped the societal reaction at large. The more electronic and print media created a hype, shared and broadcasted her bold videos, pictures, statements and interviews again and again with different angles in its regular and special transmission the more it gave boost to the gossips and rumours. Then, it was the role of social media which by limiting temporal and spatial boundaries, provided fast and easy access to the youth to share and disseminate all Qandeel Baloch related stuff with one click.

The more she became ‘viral’ on social media the more it obstructed the social life and space of individuals related to her. Hence, created real problem for both the murderer and the murdered. In a traditional society like Punjab where the whole edifice of cultural structure and notion of family honour relies

upon shame and concealment of their females, such situation was equivalent to nakedness and dishonour.

Each time the media repeated her statements, pictures, or videos, highlighted her link with any other individual be it Imran Khan, Shahid Afridi, her ex-husband or the *Mufti* it not only lessened the social space for the murderer- Waseem but symbolically, tightened the knot around the murdered’s i.e. Qandeel’s neck also.

One can argue that publicity was the main theme behind her such acts and media only helped her to achieve her goal. But the counterproductive and unintended outcome of that publicity could be that much severe it was somewhat either miscalculated by the model herself or the media or may be by both. As she herself stated in her interview broadcasted by the Geo News (<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4jruw8>): “To enjoy fame by cheap publicity stunts is very costly job. If it is that much easy task why not others go for it? Had it been so easy than everyone could have enjoyed fame these days.” (Translated).

She probably, considered that scandal with the *Mufti* could buy her some more media coverage and attention the way she experienced when she went outside Imran Khan’s home and offered him to marry her or the way she offered to do a strip dance for the nation and vowed to dedicate it to cricketer Shahid Afridi (via her twitter account video upload of March 19, 2016) as reward for winning a cricket match against India. However, the scandal with the *Mufti* turned out to be the last nail in the coffin. Although it seems that she herself somewhat realized that she could not cope with the unintended outcome and rightly perceived the threat, as one can easily interpret from her tense body language in her last press conference (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuyTR40OBvs>) too, by then it was too late. The chain of events had led her to this point was no doubt initiated by herself but the counterproductive results which came forward really in a fast and speedy manner were no doubt triggered by the cultural norms. And the media only worked as a catalyst in this whole social process.

TABLE I: RESPONSE OF THE GROUP C
SOURCE: [24]

Serial No.& Gender	Comments
1 Male	“Finally a good news after long tim”
2 Male	She was disgrace as a Pakistani and as a Muslim, never liked her.”
3 Male	“.. #QandeelBaloch has been shot dead in a honour killing by her brother and these ppl are happy. Inhuman”
4 Male	“Qandeel Baloch was disgrace tbh, her brother did it well.”
5 Male	“... she created such a hype for herself that at this point in time, it can be anyone, blaming the murder on anyone else!”
6 Male	“A girl who decides to publish her naked pics for sake of publicity...what her brother is sponse to do???.....Not supportin this cruel act..but just askin all feminists to look both sides who just blamin mens..”

7	Female	“Have you ever heard of a sister murder her brother over his beghairati ⁴ ? No? Thought so. Not about honor, but patriarchy!...”
8	Female	“Media houses should stop saying 'ghairat kay naam ⁵ say it was his huge fragile male ego..”
9	Female	“Media who published her husband and son's pics - are also responsible for her killing. You have also provoked her murder..”
10	Female	“She didn't conform to the norm, outspoken & unapologetic, silenced 4 ever. Shocked & saddened at #QandeelBaloch's murder”
11	Female	“Another cold blooded murder #QandeelBaloch in the name of honour #honourkilling ,sad,disgusting and unacceptable!”
12	Female	“Why don't women kill their sons and brothers in the name of honour? #QandeelBaloch”
13	Female	“Qandeel Baloch was a disgrace to Pakistan. She's certainly gonna suffer in hell. Her brother did well.”
14	Female	“Where there is no honor killing, there are hoes like #QandeelBaloch. Honor killing is a good thing sometimes”
15	Female	“Thank you to his brother for killing his asshole sister #QandeelBaloch”.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is thankful to all groups, and (her father) Mr. Mir Waqar Aziz for his time and support, especially, in arranging informal data collection gatherings with the group A. Special thanks to Mr. Malangi, for providing access to the remote region of the Southern Punjab and his intellectual insights about its culture.

REFERENCES

- [1] I. Gabol and T. Subhani, “Qandeel Baloch murdered by brother in Multan: Police,” *Dawn Webdesk*, pp.1-4, July 16, 2016.
- [2] “Facebook blocks qandeel baloch's fan page,” *News Webdesk*, pp.1-2, July 23, 2016.
- [3] “Qandeel Baloch Murdered in Multan for ‘Honour,’” *Dunya News TV Webdesk*, pp.1-3, July 16, 2016.
- [4] I. Gabol, and T. Subhani, “Qandeel Baloch murdered by brother in Multan: Police,” *Dawn Webdesk*, pp.1-4, July 16, 2016.
- [5] “Qandeel Baloch wanted car, bungalow from me, claims ex-husband,” *Pakistan Today Webdesk*, pp.1-2, July 13, 2016.
- [6] “Qandeel Was Planning to Settle Abroad, Wanted Indian Citizenship,” *News Webdesk*, pp 1-2, July 18, 2016.
- [7] “Qandeel Decides to Leave Pakistan after Eid,” *Express Tribune Webdesk*, pp.1-2, July 5, 2016.
- [8] “Suspect Waseem Names Accomplices in Qandeel's Murder,” *News Webdesk*, pp.1-2, July 22, 2016.
- [9] V. Martin. “Murder in Bushehr in 1844: the case of Bibi Asilu,” *Iran*, vol. 46, pp. 285–292, 2008.
- [10] T.H. Wasti, “The law on honour killing: A British innovation in the criminal law of the Indian Subcontinent and its subsequent metamorphosis under Pakistan penal code,” *South Asian Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 361–411, July-December, 2010.
- [11] M. Bilal, “Pakistan passes anti-honour killings and anti-rape bills,” *Dawn*, p.1, October 7, 2016.

- [12] D. Gupta, “Tyranny of Cousins,” *India International Centre Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 46–56, Autumn, 2010.
- [13] F. Faqir, “Intrafamily femicide in defence of honour: The case of Jordan,” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 65–82, Feb. 2001.
- [14] M. Kurkiala. (February 2003). Interpreting honour killings: The story of Fadime Sahindal (1975–2002) in the Swedish Press. *Anthropology Today*. [Online]. 19 (1), pp. 6–7. Available: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8322.00157>
- [15] M. Marsden. (March 2007). Love and elopement in Northern Pakistan. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. [Online]. 13 (1), pp. 91–108. Available: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2007.00415.x>
- [16] A. Alvi. (April 2013). Concealment and revealment the Muslim veil in context. *Current Anthropology*. [Online]. 54 (2), pp. 177–99. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669732>
- [17] H. Chaudhry, “No One Gives Me Any Credit for Speaking about Girl Power: Qandeel Baloch,” *Images Dawn*, pp.1-9, July 14, 2016.
- [18] H. Chaudhry, “No One Gives Me Any Credit for Speaking about Girl Power: Qandeel Baloch,” *Images Dawn*, pp.1-9, July 14, 2016.
- [19] H. Chaudhry, “No One Gives Me Any Credit for Speaking about Girl Power: Qandeel Baloch,” *Images Dawn*, pp.1-9, July 14, 2016.
- [20] “Pakistani model qandeel Baloch killed by brother after friends' taunts – Mother,” *Guardian Agence France-Presse*, pp.1-2, July 28, 2016.
- [21] S. Bhatti and C. Luu, “Father of slain social media star: ‘It is my desire to take revenge,’” *CNN Web*, pp. 1-4, July 26, 2016.
- [22] “My Brave Daughter Has Been Murdered: Qandeel Baloch's Father,” *Pakistan Today Staff Report*, pp.1-2, July 16, 2016.
- [23] “Qandeel Baloch wanted car, bungalow from me, claims ex-husband,” *Pakistan Today Webdesk*, pp.1-2, July 13, 2016.
- [24] “‘Qandeel Baloch Was a Disgrace, Her Brother Did Well’: Shocking Twitter Reactions to Her Death,” *DNA India WebTeam*, pp.1-8, July 16, 2016.



Umm-e-Habiba is Pakistani feminist political scientist and doctoral research candidate at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan. She holds an M.Sc. in international relations and M.Phil. in Pakistan Studies. Her area of interest/research are South Asian maritime security, Pakistan's foreign relations and gender issues.

Since 2013, she has been associated with the Directorate of Public Relations Pakistan Navy as Freelance researcher/columnist. Moreover, she has also served as Lecturer Human Rights and Pakistan Studies in Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi and various government colleges of Islamabad during 2014 to 2017. Currently, she is associated as Lecturer with the institute of civil engineering at National University of Science & Technology.

Miss Habiba is also participant of “2017 Women, Peace & Security + Gender Peace & Security Next Generation Symposium” organized by the Women in International Security (WIIS) and member of the WIIS global network.

⁴ Shameful act.

⁵ Honor killing.