

FEMALE INFANTICIDE AND KILLING WOMEN FOR GIVING BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL

-A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN-

Aasia Khatoon Khattak

Ms., International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan, asiakhttk@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper analyses the educational, social, domestic, humanitarian aspects of the discrimination, sexual violation, and murdering women with the pretext of "honor" as well as killing women for giving birth to a baby-girl, female infanticide i.e. killing of the newborn baby-girls, abortion of female fetuses, besides physiological suppression of women. These are some of the discriminations exacted upon women especially in the Third World countries and South Asia particularly in Pakistan because of misconceptions and distorted cultural elements. Social conservatism is prominent in various segments of the Pakistani society by barring women from receiving basic and advanced education, hindering upward mobility of women in public sphere, and providing lesser or limited opportunities for women in the community. It is unfortunate that a woman is oft considered as a mere instrument of reproduction that functions for making and expanding families. A greater segment of society esteem and rejoice with the birth of a baby boy over the birth of baby girl. A newborn baby girl is regarded as a bad omen, financial burden, as well as a symbol of potential disgrace and disrespect for the entire family. The number of murder cases of women who are killed for giving birth to a baby-girl, female infanticides (killings of newborn baby-girls), and abortion of the newborn baby-girls occasionally make the headlines in Pakistan and the South Asia in general.

The paper highlights situations from comparative studies conducted among the Muslim and non-Muslim societies with reference of murdering women on giving birth to a baby-girl and female infanticides. Expressing a number of reasons, challenges and suggestions, the paper aims for discussing and analyzing the challenges, critical facts and problems that arrests the freedom, rights and honor of women to the extent of resorting to murdering them and their newborn.

Descriptive-analytical methodology is used in this research to describe the situations and analyze them with arguments.

Another purpose of this paper is to define and examine the pivotal role of women in the society as a mother, sister, and daughter but most importantly as an individual herself in order to bring better changes and improvements to her status. The researcher seeks ways to initiate for changes in people's perceptions from conservatism to moderation. In light of such discussions, and facts, answers are sought to a number of challenges as how we may strive for reducing weaknesses in women's societal roles and status in the progressive and developing societies of the 21st century which are also delineated by utter existence of poverty, communal divisions by different religious sects, tribes, cultures and an assortment of living standards regionally and worldwide. Most importantly, this is to be taken into consideration as the current Pakistani and regional societies are male chauvinist, and women are not deemed as equal to men. While the globalized world has come a long way by numerous inventions, continuous scientific progress, incredible discoveries in micro and macro scales, and founding of various state and non-state international humanitarian organizations for giving a louder voice for the rights of women worldwide, the development of human minds, thinking, perceptions and universal values such as respect and equality for all lags well far behind. It is concluded in the paper that the freedom and protection of women need to bring changes in the minds and perceptions of the people to result in permanent positive changes in their attitudes and values.

Keywords: Female Infanticide, Pakistan South Asia, Muslims and Non-Muslim Societies