

Honour Killing in Sindh

Men's and Women's Divergent Accounts

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PhD

University of York

Women's Studies

March 2016

Abstract

The aim of this project is to investigate the phenomenon of honour-related violence, the most extreme form of which is honour killing. The research was conducted in Sindh (one of the four provinces of Pakistan). The main research question is, 'Are these killings for honour?' This study was inspired by a need to investigate whether the practice of honour killing in Sindh is still guided by the norm of honour or whether other elements have come to the fore. It is comprised of the experiences of those involved in honour killings through informal, semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews, conducted under the framework of the qualitative method. The aim of my thesis is to apply a feminist perspective in interpreting the data to explore the tradition of honour killing and to let the versions of the affected people be heard. In my research, the women who are accused as *karis*, having very little redress, are uncertain about their lives; they speak and reveal the motives behind the allegations and killings in the name of honour. The male killers, whom I met inside and outside the jails, justify their act of killing in the name of honour, culture, tradition and religion. Drawing upon interviews with thirteen women and thirteen men, I explore and interpret the data to reveal their childhood, educational, financial and social conditions and the impacts of these on their lives, thoughts and actions. By viewing the rise in honour killings in Sindh over the last three decades as a suspicious change, I argue that there are some notable features such as the Pakistani law, gender discrimination in every walk of life, the social and economic situation and cultural and religious interpretations of notions about honour killing in the light of the interviewees' accounts. Although this is a small-scale study, its findings help make recommendations for future research in the field.

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Acknowledgements

I have learned from my four years of research that a PhD is not a short or simple journey. It begins with a passionate urge to discover something unique about a particular topic and ends up with an immense desire to gain knowledge through studying, visiting and revisiting a set of issues in order to see things clearly and deeply. When I decided to work on this subject, about which I had only a little knowledge, I felt lonely and was not sure how I would accomplish such a huge task. Now, when I look back over it, I see so many people supporting me and I feel the strength they have given to me.

First of all, I sincerely thank my thesis supervisor, Professor Stevi Jackson. There are no proper words to convey my deep gratitude and respect for her; she trusted my ability and offered me the precious opportunity to study at the Centre for Women's Studies. She has inspired me to become an independent researcher and to gain a wider perspective on my subject, and she has helped me to realize the power of critical reasoning. The credit for my being able to complete the thesis goes to Professor Jackson for her strong support, timely encouragement and endless patience.

My sincere thanks must also go to the members of my thesis advisory committee: Dr Ann Kaloski-Naylor and Professor Gabriele Griffin. They generously gave their time to offer me valuable comments towards improving my work. My especial thanks go to Dr Kaloski-Naylor. I have benefited from her truly emotional support when it was required the most. Also, the administrator at CWS, Harriet Badger, is memorable, not only for her prompt support but also for her kind care. I am so grateful to the Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust for choosing me as one of its scholarship recipients for 2013.

I am heartily grateful to all my research participants for sharing with me their life stories. Without their cooperation, I could not have collected such good data. Their trust in me was one of my motivations for completing this thesis. I also send my regards to all my friends who gave me moral support during my stay in CWS. I cannot forget those who remained with me during hard times. I came to York as a stranger, along with my two young children,

but my kind neighbour, Margaret Escritt, looked after us. Despite her poor health, she helped my children and me at many odd times. She was indeed the person who most made me feel that I was not away from my family. My gratitude to Ghazal Kazim and Kazim Lakyaree who have also been generous with their love and encouragement. I am so very grateful to my friend Dr Angham A. Abdullah, who was always available for me during hard times. We shared a number of occasions together, we wept and laughed together, went through hard times together, she cheered me on, and we celebrated our family events together. In addition, I cannot overlook the moral support of Dr Khalid Laghari and his wife Sandra, who were just one call away from me and through thick and thin they showed their absolute support. I would like to send my gratitude to one person, a great Pakistani comedian Umar Sharif, whom I have never met but he saved me from being stressed out. The process of collecting and transcribing the sensitive data made me very emotional to the extent that at one point I intended to seek help of some doctor. At that difficult time, his humorous video clips cheered me up and I came back to normal without any medicine.

A big 'thank you' to my best friend and great companion, my beloved husband. I really owe him a lot. He was the first person to endorse my project and encourage me to work on it. In order to enable me to complete my PhD studies, he supported me not only morally but also financially. Despite the physical distance between us, he remained aware and involved with our situation. It was his love and encouragement that helped me get through this agonizing period in the most positive way. Finally, I give special thanks with love to my wonderful son and daughter. I am indebted to them. I feel sorry that I did not give them enough attention or time because of this project. They understood and respected my limitations, tight schedule and the sensitivity of my research and did not expect as much as they might have done. It was their love that raised me up again when I became weary.

Author's Declaration

The work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of York. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree.

Introduction

It was a cold dreary evening in December 1979 when I first came across the word *kari*¹ being used by my mother with great contempt. My primary school teacher had brutally killed his wife with a kitchen knife; the act had terrorised hundreds of children like me. I used to visit my teacher's house quite often, which was close to our home. 'But why did he kill her? She was so beautiful and adorable' I asked my mother. The only reply I received was a long 'Sssshhhhh', a deep sound came out of her mouth and she put her right index finger to her lips. After a little pause, the only sentence she uttered in a stern voice was 'She had to be killed because she was a *kari*. Understood?' Being terribly frightened, I looked into her eyes; she was unbelievably serious. That was my first encounter with the word *kari*. The stigma attached to this word became imprinted on my mind with the horrifying message that one should hate and eliminate a woman once she is declared a *kari*. For years after that incident, I was unable to talk of or even hear any conversation about that murder. I still do not know what happened to the man involved in this case because soon afterwards my parents moved to another city.

As I grew up, the number of such incidents also grew. The newspapers kept publishing cases in which men had chopped off women's noses and ears as a punishment for arguing or some other domestic issue, such as for visiting their natal families, working carelessly at home, finding a hair in the food or seeing them talking to someone not liked by the husband or his family. The recurrent, bloody photos of beheaded women and often of men frequently published in the local newspapers and magazines caught my attention. The murdered couples or individuals were called *kari* and *karo*² out of hatred and the killings were considered as honour killings. I cannot remember the murders being condemned by anyone on any occasion but, rather, that the honour killings were seen as a matter of cultural pride.

Soon I learnt that the world in which I was surviving was divided into two major compartments: one for men and the other for women. However, the roles of the two genders were very different as men were authorized to check and restrict the conduct of women and women had to be obedient to the male-defined rules and regulations. Although I was part of a society in which norms and traditions revolved around the supremacy of men over women, it

¹ A fallen, adulteress woman.

² A fallen, adulterer man.

was not easy for me to comprehend the extreme violence known as honour killing. All I could understand was that honour killing was the homicide of a family member (usually a woman) by other family members (mostly men) and that it generally took place when a man claimed that a kinswoman had brought dishonour to him or to his family. And that the 'dishonour' brought to the family was the claim that the woman was of loose moral character (within the paradigm of the religio-cultural tradition) or guilty of having had an extra or premarital relationship. The rationale was that the woman and the man she was involved with were supposed to be killed in order to restore the lost honour of the family and the tribe. I could only figure out that men believed that they were inherently honourable and that women enhanced their honour. Therefore, when the men felt their honour violated, they felt justified in killing those women, who in their opinion were the cause of damaging or tarnishing their honour.

In this highly patriarchal culture, honour was one of the most common words to be spoken not only by men but also by women. However, defining, describing and understanding the complex phenomenon of honour was beyond my capacity because in that particular society, honour had no limits. Men's honour was the most fragile and scary phenomenon I had encountered; it was offended when a girl asked for the marriage of her choice, when a woman asked for a divorce from her abusive husband, when a woman laughed loudly or her head was uncovered or if she were dressed up; and endangered by girls' education. Honour has certainly been the power in the hands of men to control women, both directly and indirectly.

From the mid-nineteenth century, international media have been reporting and considering honour killing a serious threat to the existence of women in the Islamic world (Hussain, 2007; Iqbal 2006; Kalanauri, 2014). Yet it was only in the last decade of the twentieth century that some Pakistani journalists and researchers began criticising the abstract values attached to the word 'honour' in the context of Pakistani society. Shahid (1999) states that honour is a tribal and feudal trend and argues that 'since our society [Pakistan] is one of the most traditional and conservative societies with strong religious fundamentalism so the countrymen tend to develop an unhealthy sense of honour'. Siddiquie (2005: 264) explains more explicitly: 'honour is used as a motivation, justification or mitigation for violence against women as seen from the perspective of the perpetrator, often with the collusion or active involvement of the community'. Hence, as these commentators argue, it is essentially a tool to control a woman's

behaviour with the collaboration of various sections of society. However, the meaning attached to the word honour, which affects both the social and personal standing of an individual or a community, is unique in the context of the northern part of Sindh³ (the area of my research). In her article *Honour Killings: Code of Dishonour*, Shah (1998) interviewed one of the *waderas*⁴, Sardar⁵ Sultan Mugheri, from upper⁶ Sindh who stated his views about honour in the following words, '*ghariat* and *izzat*⁷ come with money and property. And if *Izzat* (dignity) is violated, then it is justified to kill and die for honour'. Hence, Shah (1998) elaborates, '*ghariat* and *izzat* reside in the face, the nose, and the head, not to forget the beard in the male. The beard is what the Baloch⁸ swear by and use as oath'.⁹ The abstract nature of honour is signified in these words of *Sardar* Sultan Mugheri who represents the general philosophy of the tribal and feudal honour of Sindh, when he says that a woman is valued as a man's property and to preserve the honour of that property, killing is justified.

What actually inspired me to embark on a PhD project about the issue of honour killing was a shocking incident, which I saw on the road before dawn one morning. In 2004, my husband was posted to a small city of interior Sindh while both my children and I lived in Karachi. During the summer vacation, my children and I visited my husband. For the journey back to Karachi, I preferred to set out by 4am in order to avoid heavy traffic on the roads. The driver taking us to Karachi stopped in Hyderabad to refuel. As soon as he started up the car again, loud noises and firing were heard. The driver, in his confusion tried to accelerate, but he had to stop at once as two men were seen running into the middle of the road chasing after a woman who was screaming 'Help. Help. I'm not a *kari*, not a *kari*, don't kill me, for God's sake help me, help'. In the middle of the commotion, I heard the ear-piercing shots and then a dreadful scream. Within a few minutes there was a deadly silence as if nothing had happened, which made my children, the driver and myself numb for some time. The next thing I remember was

³ One of the four provinces of Pakistan.

⁴ *Wadera* is a word in *Sindhi* language used for a tribal/feudal landlord of a village or of many villages. In the local language there are many terms for the feudal *wadera*, such as *sardar*, *raees* and *bhotar*.

⁵ A *wadera* who is regarded as a chief of a whole tribe and *waderas* of that tribe. Although *sardar* means a tribal leader and *wadera* is an area landlord, the local people use the terms interchangeably.

⁶ Upper Sindh is another name for the northern area of Sindh.

⁷ *Ghairat* is a word used in most of the Pakistani and Indian languages for honour. *Izzat* means dignity in almost all the languages of the sub-continent.

⁸ Baloch is one of the main nations of Pakistan that mostly live in Baluchistan (the largest province of Pakistan) and northern Sindh (the area of Sindh adjacent to the boundary of Baluchistan).

⁹ This is when a man takes an *oath* on his beard; he *swears by his* honesty or honour, saying, 'I promise to fulfil or accomplish the specific mission.'

the driver saying, 'Let's get away from here, the police will be here anytime.' A little further on, I saw a small pool of blood, oozing from the body of the woman. I can still recall the long, black hair freely spread out on the road.

That was the situation in Sindh, where I grew up. The overt use of the word 'honour' invoked to enslave women and the frequent cases of honour killing turned my fear and sense of helplessness into anger and bitterness. Many questions arose for me: Why is gender discrimination allowed to that level? Why were women being killed mercilessly in the name of honour with the support of the community with no-one, including the law enforcing agencies, intervening to rescue them? Is honour superior to human life? If so, then who has decided that it should be so? Why can only men exercise the power of honour and kill whoever they want, whenever they decide? Do women have no honour?

As there was no history in upper Sindh of a woman ever having killed her father, brother, son or husband on the pretext of honour, I used to think about what a woman could do to save or restore her honour should she find her husband in a compromising position with another woman. I dared not to ask my questions to anyone because the majority of people, including women, believed that honour was attributed to men only. Men's infidelity was taken as a natural occurrence. Men, in the presence of their first wife, could marry for a second or third time. They could proudly discuss their extra-marital relations even at home to tease their wives. Men's infidelity is supported by religious doctrines and therefore was embraced by the majority of people. Maxims, folk tales and ancient sayings such as 'Man is man; betrayal is a sign of manhood' have played a motivating role in extending liberty to men whereas women's sense of honour was not supposed to be harmed by anything a man could do.

I met a number of Pakistani intellectuals, writers, and political and social activists during and after my university education and discussed the tradition of honour killing with them. Most of them agreed with Hyder (2004: 5) that '*karo-kari*¹⁰ is a practical demonstration of an imbalanced society' but they emphasized the point that honour killing was not rooted in Sindh. To my surprise, most of them agreed that they had not even heard the term honour killing,

¹⁰ *Karo-kari* is an act of murder in which a person is killed for his or her actual or perceived immoral behaviour.

until the military dictator General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq¹¹ overthrew the democratic government in 1977 and declared martial law.

General Zia came to power through an overnight military coup and promptly imprisoned the very first democratically-elected Prime Minister¹² of Pakistan. Being furious about the unjust imposition of martial law, journalists, members of the civil society and political workers staged demonstrations. The countrywide protests were dealt with inhumanely and for the first time in the history of Pakistan public flogging of political prisoners and journalists was carried out. To divert the international media's attention from the riots caused by overthrowing the legal democratic government of the Pakistan People's Party,¹³ General Zia charged the overthrown government with being corrupt and un-Islamic. To justify his rule and the undemocratic actions, he created the slogan 'Zia commits himself to enforcing his interpretation of *Nizam-e-Mustafa*¹⁴ and establishing an Islamic state and *Sharia*¹⁵ law' (Kepel, 2002: 101). With this slogan, he soon won overwhelming support from the country's conservative and theological forces. In 1978, General Zia established 'Shariat Appellate Benches, grafted on to Pakistan's four High Courts' (Hussain, 2005: 400). The benches were tasked to determine cases based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.¹⁶ A *Sharia* council was appointed to bring the state's legal statutes into alignment with Islamic doctrine (Hussain, 2007). The purpose of creating a *Shariat* Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court was to give it status as the final authority in *Sharia* cases.

¹¹ General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq was the sixth President of Pakistan from 1977 until his death in 1988, having declared martial law for the third time in the country's history in 1977. He was Pakistan's longest-serving head of state, ruling for eleven years. He is most noted for his efforts to bring religion into mainstream society within Pakistan and in foreign policy, for his close relationship with the United States and support for the so-called Afghan Mujahedeen resistance against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

¹² Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a social, secular political leader of Pakistan, served as President of Pakistan from 1971 to 1973 and as Prime Minister from 1973 to 1977. In 1977, he was ousted in a military coup by General Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq and was arrested. He was hanged on 4 April 1979 for allegedly ordering the murder of a political opponent in 1974.

¹³ Commonly referred to as PPP, is a social democratic political party in Pakistan created by its founder Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1967.

¹⁴ Establishing an Islamic state based on *Sharia* law would mean a return to the early days of Islam when the Islamic prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ruled the Muslim state.

¹⁵ Islamic religion-based law is called *Sharia*. These laws are derived from the Qur'an, *Sunnah* (the practices of the Prophet) and *Hadith* (saying of the Prophet). The modern forms of *Sharia* law have been derived from various schools of legal interpretations created by four religious scholars in different periods of early Muslim history and in the context of different socio-economic and political systems, Hanafi (AD 699-767), Maliki (AD 713-795), Shafi (AD 767-820) and Hanbali (AD 780-813). In Pakistan, the state derives dominantly from the Hanafi school of thought, which is Sunni ideology, (The dominant group of Muslims in Pakistan) (Khan, 2006: 229).

¹⁶ *Sunnah*, (plural *Sunan*) is the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) defined as a path, a way and manner of life.

Apart from *deeni madrassahs*¹⁷ expansions of the reform of cultural policies (which decried the influence of Western culture and music in the country), the creation of sectarian divisions between *Shia*,¹⁸ *Sunni*¹⁹ and other religious groups and sects, and the infamous Blasphemy Law,²⁰ a number of constitutional amendments were made in order to bring the country's constitution into accordance with the Islamic *Sharia* Law. General Zia, with the overwhelming support of rigid religio-political parties successfully implanted such ordinances into the constitution of Pakistan, which eventually went against human rights and increased the miseries of women.

The most controversial of the ordinances were the *Hudood*²¹ Ordinance (1979) and the *Qanun-e-Shahadat*²² Order (1984). These ordinances added new criminal offences of adultery and fornication to Pakistani law and new punishments of whipping, amputation and stoning to death (Lau, 2007). The provisions relating to *zina*²³ were replaced by the ordinance with punishments of a flogging of 100 lashes for unmarried offenders (women and men found guilty of having extra-marital relations) and stoning to death for married offenders (Heng & Liew, 2010).

However, these corporal punishments were not the only way of penalising women. As Heng and Liew explain: 'More worrisome for human rights and women's rights advocates, some lawyers and politicians, was the incarceration of thousands of rape victims on charges of *zina*' (Heng & Liew, 2010: 360). As for all these *Hudood* punishments, they were dependent on

¹⁷ Religious schools.

¹⁸ One of the two main branches of Islam that rejects the first three *Sunni* caliphs and regards Ali (the fourth caliph), as Muhammad's first true successor.

¹⁹ One of the two main branches of Islam, differing from *Shia* in its understanding of the *Sunnah* and in its acceptance of the first three caliphs.

²⁰ The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code were amended, through ordinances in 1980, 1982 and 1986 to declare anything implying disrespect to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH), *Ahl-e-Bait* (family of the prophet), *Sahaba* (companions of the prophet) and *Sha'ar-i-Islam* (Islamic symbols), was a cognizable offence, punishable with imprisonment or a fine, or with both.

²¹ *Hudood* means limits or restrictions, as in limits of acceptable behaviour in Islamic law.

²² Blasphemy is the act of insulting or showing contempt for God, religious or holy persons or toward something considered sacred, with penalties ranging from a fine to death. From 1987 to 2014 over 1300 people have been accused of blasphemy, mostly from non-Muslim religious minorities. The vast majority of the accusations were lodged for desecration of the Qur'an. *BBC News*, 6 November 2014.

²³ The Arabic word *zina* means all extra-marital sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to one another through a *nikah* (marriage contract). It includes extra-marital and pre-marital sex. 'According to Islam '*zina*' constituted social suicide – an entire society commits suicide over time if it allows fornication and adultery to go unpunished in the Islamic style' (Mirza, 2008). *Hudood* Ordinances are laws in Pakistan that were enacted in 1979. They replaced parts of the secular, British-era Pakistan Penal Code. Before the implementations of the *Hudood* Ordinances, state had nothing to do with *zina*.

Islamic *Hudd*²⁴ proof. This proof requires four Muslim men of good repute testifying as witnesses to the crime in question. In practice, uncorroborated testimony by women was inadmissible in *Hudood* crimes (Hussain, 2005). So in cases of rape, victims were sometimes charged with fornication and jailed while their rapists were freed because the women could not comply with the *Hudd* requirement of having four reputable Muslim men testifying to the rape. According to Shah (1998: 56), ‘statutory law under the *Zina* Ordinance does not strictly differentiate between rape and fornication either; in fact, if a raped woman cannot prove that she did not consent to intercourse, she is considered to have committed *zina*, fornication, which attracts severe punishments. It does not dishonour the rapist’. Both of these laws have had a devastating effect on the rights of women. ‘Girls as young as twelve were also sometimes jailed and prosecuted for having extra-marital intercourse because the ordinance abolished Pakistan’s statutory rape law (*Human Rights Watch*, 1999: 18). In 1979, before the ordinances went into effect, there were 70 women held in Pakistani prisons but by 1988, there were 6,000 (Ashfaq, 2006). As a consequence of the *Hudood* Ordinance, no woman could dare to bring anything to the notice of the legal authority, whether it was rape or inhuman violence because of the highly gender-discriminatory legal laws (Khan, 2006). According to the legal scholar Martin Lau:

While it was easy to file a case against a woman accusing her of adultery, the *Zina* Ordinance made it very difficult for a woman to obtain bail pending trial. Worse, in actual practice, the vast majority of accused women were found guilty by the trial court only to be acquitted on appeal to the Federal *Shariat* Court. By then they had spent many years in jail, were ostracized by their families, and had become social outcasts. (Lau, 2007: 1296)

Women with broken bones, burns, and other serious physical injuries, if brought to the hospital at all, were given treatment but the perpetrators were barely subject to any kind of investigation. Even suicides, rape and murders of women (of any age) by their kinsmen could not receive any justice from the Pakistani authorities. In respect of this, Kalanauri (2014: 11) argues that ‘promulgated in the name of Islam, the *Zina* Ordinance became a tool of oppression at the hands of vengeful husbands’ and parents’ intent on punishing their wives or daughters for disobedience’. Pakistani human and women’s rights groups protested against the

²⁴ The limit.

law and complained that the law was used by the hard liners who wished to curb and control women's rights by any means in order to make them subservient.

General Zia's interpretation of Islam significantly contributed to the rise of fundamentalism. I was still a schoolgirl but was very much affected by the political upheaval, as there was a huge visible change in society. I remember, before the *Zia* era, that it was hard to find a woman wrapped in a *burqa*²⁵ in my city but all of a sudden women in *burqas* were seen everywhere. Girls of my age were ordered by the school administration to cover their heads. I had a feudal background but considered my family fairly non-religious and liberal, my father was an active political worker, yet I, and my both sisters were forced to wear a *burqa*. Upon my strong resistance and refusal to do so, I was stopped from going to the school. My further education was conditional on wearing the *burqa*. Once, when I was taken to visit a close relative, being extremely angry, I threw the *burqa* from the window of the train. I remember that the fear of being scolded or beaten was far less than the overwhelming feeling of being free from the black cage.

Although a group of social and political activists were protesting against such discriminatory laws, as a whole Pakistani society, including the majority of women, believed that since the ordinances were in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, they should therefore be part of the Islamic state's legal and social system. As Hearn (1996: 104) argues, 'a first and most basic way to continue violence is to deny it at all. This may be in total or in part'. The denial of violence was widely seen in the society in which nearly every form of abuse was denied or taken a routine matter not only for the abusers but also for the victims. In fact, on a larger scale, Pakistani society had no clear idea of domestic violence. Hitting, pushing and teasing was a common way of living and so the majority of the people, who already accepted family and domestic abuse, welcomed the ordinances. The incorporation of the *Sharia* laws into the legal and judicial system of Pakistan actually authorized men to control the actions of their kinswomen with the backing of the state. Men's actions that caused injury and physical or mental harm to women were generally part of life and were not considered violent or treated as a serious issue.

²⁵ The *burqa* is a long, loose stitched garment/clad covering the whole body from head to feet, worn in public by women, specific to Pakistan and Afghanistan and adjacent areas.

Since the death of General Zia in 1988, inconsistency and instability has prevailed in Pakistani laws. In fact, his death was not the end of his era. The greatest example of this is the promulgation of *Qisas*²⁶ and *Diyat*²⁷ Ordinances in September 1990 by his successor President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. Talbot (1998: 281) states that ‘under the law, the victim (or heirs of the victim) of a crime had the right to inflict injuries on the offender identical to the ones sustained by the victim (although the ordinance set the ‘blood money’ compensation for a woman victim at half of that for a man)’. The law, by including the term ‘blood money’,²⁸ in reality allowed the offender to absolve himself from the crime or killing by paying compensation to the victims or their heirs (who are usually relatives) if the heirs agree to this. This is called the ‘settlement’ and in these cases of honour killing the settlement was more often seen.

It is also worth considering the impact of Western interest in the issues involved. As Khan (2006: 148) explains, ‘in Pakistan, honour related violence and killings started receiving attention when human rights organizations were motivated by western donor agencies’. By 1995, the Western media had started highlighting and presenting some videos about honour killing cases in Middle Eastern countries and South Asia. From 1996 onwards, various NGOs prepared monthly and annual statistics on the subject of honour killing. The report *Human Development in South Asia* (2000: 92) reveals that in Pakistan, 176 cases of honour killing were heard in only six months of 1997, in which 70% of the victims were women. In the South Asian region, Pakistan is infamous for violence against women and honour murders have become increasingly common practice. A survey conducted by the *Thomson Reuters Foundation Trust* (2011) placed Pakistan at number three on the list of the world's most dangerous countries for women. The Pakistani government seemed finally to take the issue

²⁶ *Qisas* is an Islamic term, meaning retaliation/retribution in kind or revenge, eye for an eye, nemesis or retributive justice. It is a category of crimes in Islamic jurisprudence in which *Sharia* allows equal retaliation as the punishment. The *Qisas* principle is available against the accused, to the victim or victim's heirs, when a Muslim is murdered, suffers bodily injury or suffers property damage. In the case of murder, *Qisas* means the right of a murder victim's nearest relative or *wali* (legal guardian) to, if the court approves, take the life of the killer (Encyclopedia Britannica).

²⁷ In Islamic *Sharia* law, *Diyat* is the financial compensation paid to the victim or heirs of a victim in the cases of murder, bodily harm or property damage. It is an alternative punishment to *Qisas* (equal retaliation). In Arabic, the word means both blood money and ransom, and it is spelled sometimes as *Diya*, *Diyah* or *Diyeh* (Spevack, 2015: 81). *Diyya* compensation rates, under *Sharia*, have historically varied based on the gender and religion of the victim. Muslim women victims have typically been compensated at half the rate as Muslim male victims, whilst non-Muslims' compensation rates have varied between 1/16th to half of a Muslim, for an equivalent case (Terrill, 2012: 559).

²⁸ Blood money, a term derived from the Qur'an, suffices the punishment; the money is considered compensation under Islamic law.

seriously and established a commission of enquiry on the status of women in 1997. In the context of Sindh, the commission reported that:

During a three-month period in 1996, 66 cases of *karo-kari* in the Sindh province were recorded in the Sindhi language papers. A rural women's organization from Sindh reported in 1996 that 148 women were subjected to *karo-kari* during the previous 15 months. Another 1996 report recorded more than 300 cases of *karo-kari*. (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women, Pakistan, 1997: 87*)

Some startling statistics produced in the report of *The Human Rights' Commission of Pakistan* (2000: 18) show that '*Karo-kari* killings in Sindh were estimated at 1,410, showing a continuously rising trend over the years: 432 in 1993; 776 in 1994; 864 in 1995; 864 in 1996; 750 in 1997; 800 in 1998; and 886 in 1999'. In 2000, *karo-kari* killings claimed 393 lives in Sindh (Sabir, 2001). More recent data indicate that in 2004 Sindh had the highest occurrences of honour killings compared with other Pakistani Provinces, with 632 cases (Iqbal, 2006: 18). The 2012 RDHR²⁹ report states that 605 women and 115 men were murdered in the name of honour during 2011 in Sindh (the year I started my PhD research). However, the more worrisome fact is that 'often these figures are not more than best estimates – for violence against women goes all too often unreported' (Vlachovd & Biason, 2005: 2).

The increase in honour killing motivated me to look into the issue more carefully. I carried out some research and wrote a few articles and features in leading Pakistani Urdu newspapers based on my findings. The articles received a mixed response; it was difficult for people to think that honour killing could have motives other than honour. I was told by my superiors not to dig too deeply into the subject as it might put me in dangerous situation. However, I decided to carry on with my research into honour killings in Sindh as planned. Unfortunately my preliminary literature search was disappointing, since I could find very little relevant research on the subject. The existing literature on honour killing in Pakistan was predominantly about killings that were associated with honour-related issues and its connection with female sexuality. Most of the literature showed that honour killings were based on a suspicion of immorality on the part of the victim. This situation presented me with problems when writing my background introduction chapters, because, on the basis of my own observations and through discussions with journalists researching and reporting on the issue

²⁹ *Research and Development for Human Resources.*

over a couple of years, honour killings in Sindh were not solely based on honour-related issues, even though the killings were always given the name of honour killings. I aim to discover the underlying religious, social, communal and moral assumptions that require men to kill in the name of honour. It is worth considering why killing women over some blame and accusation is not considered as an extreme form of gender discrimination and dealt with as murder? Why does the Pakistani judicial system have a supportive role in honour killing? And above all, are honour killings in fact to do with honour or are there some other factors involved?

In the first chapter, I shall begin with a discussion of the abstract notion of honour that has justified killing. I shall discuss honour killings in Pakistan, the laws related to murder and honour killing, the prosecution system and the role of various political parties, civil society and media in honour killing, as well as women's status in Pakistan and, in particular, Sindh. In Chapter Two, I shall present an historical perspective on Sindh, discussing its economic and educational situation and marriage system. In this chapter, I shall also look at previous research conducted on honour killing in Sindh, the *jirga*³⁰ system and the situation of state-run shelters. This will be followed by a methodology chapter in which I reflect on the process of conducting my field work in northern Sindh, my experience of finding interview participants in the community, in the jails, and the shelters, conducting interviews, methodological concerns and ethical issues involved in conducting feminist research, as well as some reflection on data collection and analysis.

In the subsequent three chapters, I shall present an analysis of my data regarding the violence-related experiences of my participants from their childhood to the present day and how the tribal and cultural values related to the tradition of honour affect their lives. First, in Chapter Four I shall examine how violence and poverty are embedded in everyday life in the upper region of Sindh and the influence of these conditions on both genders. In Chapter Five, I shall explore my male participants' concept of honour killing and its justification, and how society treats them after they have committed honour killing. In Chapter Six, I shall investigate how the female participants who were threatened with death managed to escape. I shall also offer a

³⁰ The *jirga* is a local customary tribal court. It is an illegal local law-enforcing and decision-making assembly or tribal council. An informal law system which runs parallel to the state's formal law is tribal law (village courts). Its judgments come through *jirga* and implement through tribal/fudal leaders' and their henchmen.

discussion of the difficulties these women faced as life became very uncertain for them. Finally, in my conclusion I shall summarise my main findings and the contribution that I have made to the study of honour killing in Sindh, Pakistan.

Chapter One: Honour Killings, the Laws and Women

Introduction

In order to discuss honour killing in Pakistan, along with the laws that deal with such cases and their impact on women in a wider context, this chapter discusses the different ways in which killing on the pretext of honour has been supported by the law. Before focusing on the situation of Pakistan, in order to elucidate what honour is, I shall discuss the meaning of honour, its diversity, and the different boundaries and significance for men and women. I shall further explore how the concept of honour has been associated with violence in various cultures and how honour-related violence, even to the extent of killing, has long been adopted in diverse societies with the collusion of the law (see for example Brundage, 1987; Cantarella, 1991; Goldstein, 2000; Warraich, 2005). This chapter examines the means by which ancient and modern honour-related conceptions clearly differentiate between men and women. As a result, honour crime in today's world has been associated mainly with violence against women, especially in South Asia and the Middle East where the plea of honour is used as a defence for crimes ranging from domestic violence to killing (Fisk, 2010; Bhatti & Jamali *et al.*, 2011; Hussaini, 2009; Saadawi, 1989; Khouri, 2003).

To aid comprehension of the extreme form of violence known as honour killing, this chapter will explore the different perceptions of honour by which violent acts on the pretext of honour are considered not offences but honourable deeds in Pakistan³¹ (Ali, 2001; Hina, 2000; Irfan, 2008; Shah, 1999). In order to provide a background to the increasing incidence of honour killing in Pakistan, this chapter will use existing data to discuss the different ordinances and amendments embedded in the Pakistan Penal Code by the military dictator General Zia and his successors to bring Pakistani law into accordance with *Sharia* law (An-Naim, 1990; Lewis, 2001). I shall also explain the application and implementation of these ordinances in order to illustrate their impacts during the prosecution process in cases of honour killing.

I shall also discuss the role played by Pakistani civil society and the media in pressurizing

³¹ Pakistan is a federal republic, which was previously part of India under British colonialism. At the time of its independence on 14 August 1947, Pakistan consisted of five, mainly Muslim-dominated, provinces. After the separation of Bengal in 1971, this was reduced to four provinces with a population of approximately 176 million.

government authorities to look deeply into the consequences and effects of these ordinances and amendments on the lives of women (Goldenberg, 1999; Warraich, 2005). This chapter will further investigate the steps taken by consecutive democratic parliaments for the betterment of women by bringing some changes into the discriminatory laws about honour killing, which had mainly ruled against women. Later in this chapter, I shall explain women's status in Pakistan in general and Sindh in particular.

The Relationship between Honour and Violence

The word 'honour' in English refers to nobility of soul, reputation, moral behaviour or suggests respect for an honoured individual, for example in such terms as 'the guest of honour', 'code of honour' or 'buried with honour'. The concept of honour is also of fundamental importance in the whole sub-continent where the word 'honour' in general is used as a distinction, a high reward and a high standard of moral behaviour. Hence, in Pakistan, quite a few idioms also contain the word honour, such as: 'honour bound to do', 'word of honour' and 'pass an exam with honour'. Thus the concept of honour has a long history as a chivalric norm to define honourable deeds in the context of duty, responsibility, morality and ethics of an individual or a nation at large all over the world.

Interestingly, apart from the general meaning of honour, the definition of the word in both English and Pakistani languages splits into two obviously different groupings in describing 'honour' for men and women. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1842: 553) explains that, 'honour is more particularly applied to two kinds of virtues, bravery in man and chastity in woman'. The definition assigns praiseworthy duties to men whereas it is confined only to the bodies of women. This could be defined as man being responsible for everything's honour whereas woman is responsible for her bodily honour only. Honour is therefore 'a male value derived and viewed against the index of a woman's body', as Shah puts it (*Dawn*, 19 November 1998). The highly gender-differentiated meaning of honour and the dual standards of moral and sexual conduct for men and women determine the status of women as subservient to men in a patriarchal society.

Thus the double standard of sexual morality and the 'concept of honour is deeply embedded male authority over female in patriarchal society' (Baker *et al.*, 1999: 164) and assigns men

and women not only two unequal responsibilities but also authorises men to control women's actions. Mernissi (1975: 61), in the context of North Africa, argues that 'honour and purity, two particularly sensitive emotional concepts, link the men's prestige in an almost fatal way to the sexual behaviour of the women under his charge, be they wives, sisters or unmarried female relatives'. It thus appears that either women have no respect or honour or by nature women are incapable of understanding what honour is and, therefore, men should use their power to enforce it in order to keep both the woman's and the family's honour safe. This definition of honour assists men in imposing their conception of honour onto women, thus becoming the caretakers of women's sensual, social and behavioural conduct. Saadawi (1989: 31) explains that 'a man's honour is safe as long as the female members of his family keep their hymens intact'. In other words, women's sexual character determines men's honour and the respect they receive. Since men's honour is in the hands of their female relatives, if it is violated, the men take revenge through violence and thus attempt to restore their honour.

Ruggi (2006) argues that this control of men over women is due to the fertility or reproductive power of a woman that needs to be controlled by the men of the family, clan, or tribe so as to use her as a factory for making men. Consequently, in the name of honour, men became the guardians of women's reproductive bodily organs and assumed the right to kill women whom they suspect of being adulteresses or young girls whom they believe to have lost their virginity. Thus the custody of women passes on from father, uncles, and brothers to the husbands and sons and so on. Khan (2006) argues that girls are sometimes killed on mere suspicion of loss of virginity and 95% of girls killed in Jordan have had no sexual relations at all. Consequently, the inferior status of women, which confines them to the function of reproduction, eventually puts them not only in a state of subordination but also in a vulnerable position as their focus is to safeguard their virginity as the property of a man. Hussaini (2009) argues:

As men created and dominated the religious, cultural and judicial elements of society, women became subordinate, as they were legally, culturally and religiously bound by their husbands and male relatives to keep the family honour maintained. This meant that women had to be restricted so there would be less chance that the precious community would be lost (Hussaini, 2009: 101).

Thus, the standards of honour in patriarchal societies do not have the same parameters for

women as they have for men. The subjugated position of women at the hands of men, through man-made laws, has for centuries allowed men to impose unjust cruelty upon women. The connection with honour-based violence is elaborated by Baker *et al.* (1999: 164), who argue that it reflects three basic elements: '1) control, or desire to exert control, over a woman's behaviour, 2) a male's feeling of shame over his loss of control, or perceived loss of control, over her behaviour, and 3) community or familial involvement in augmenting and addressing this shame'. Henceforward, along with the men of the family, the community and other social actors also determine whether women are acting according to acceptable standards or not. The patriarchal social structure is reinforced if women live in a state in which honour crimes are facilitated by the law. According to anti-patriarchal critiques: 'men's violence is a general means of maintaining and reinforcing power that is available to men' (Hearn, 1996: 30). Welchman and Hossain (2005) state that:

Whether we are looking at the 'fit of fury', in Middle Eastern states, 'violent emotion', 'in the heat of passion' in Latin America, or 'extreme emotional distress' in the USA, it is clear that societies across the world – through their laws and their courts – continue to countenance legal defences that overwhelmingly benefit males committing violence against females. (Welchman & Hossain, 2005: 13).

Due to the support of various laws to protect men's honour crimes, 'Subjugation, exploitation and commodification of women are ancient and widespread' (Jafri, 2008: 27). It is not long since violence against women was first recognized as a significant issue of human rights throughout the world (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Mogford, 2011). This recognition has brought noteworthy changes in worldwide policies and practices; however, it was restricted to the English-speaking world (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Thus, considering the history of honour crimes may be useful for gaining an understanding of how a murder on the pretext of honour is considered to be not a criminal act but a respectable deed.

Honour Killing

Khouri (2003: 28) suggests that the history of honour killing goes back as far as 1200 BC and was practised under the rule of Hammurabi and other Assyrian tribes. Goldstein (2002: 12) finds its roots in ancient Rome where, for the first time in history, women's sexual conduct became subject to legislation during the reign of Augustus (22 BC to 17 AD), when the

husband and father of an adulteress were given the right to kill her. This law, with the purpose of tracking the sexual purity of a woman as a way to keep her kinsmen's level of honour high, remained in effect for about two thousand years (Cantarella, 1991: 230). However, laws that associated insult, shame and honour with the actions of women were not limited to the Roman Empire; in medieval Europe early Jewish law mandated death by stoning for an adulterous wife and her partner (Cantarella, 1991). Under Ottoman rule, a killer would 'sprinkle his victim's blood on his clothes and parade through the streets displaying the bloody murder weapon ... to increase his honour' (Kressel, 1981: 143). In Arab societies, if a woman caused shame to the family, a man or men must react accordingly otherwise they will be the cause of adding disgrace (Giant, 1979, cited in Baker *et al.*, 1999). The fact that 'Hammurabi, Aristotle, Augustus, Aquinas and others, were occupied by notions of sexual conduct, honour and shedding of blood demonstrate that killing for honour transcends space, religion and time' (Jafri, 2008: 32).

This historical overview confirms that the concept and the ritual act of honour killing with legislative backing is very old and is not limited to any specific part of the world (Khan 2006; Welchman & Hossain, 2005). Brown, an advocacy director for Human Rights Watch (cited in *National Geographic News*, 28 October 2010), maintains that at present the practice of honour killing 'goes across cultures and across religions'. A relatively current research about 'Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-Based Violence' (2007-08: 13) by the Home Affairs Committee of the UK House of Commons maintains that 'honour based violence is not connected with a particular religion or religious practice, and has been recorded across Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.' These statements indicate that honour killings have been reported not only in Islamic countries such as Egypt, Iran, Jordan, the Palestinian National Authority, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, and other Mediterranean and Persian Gulf countries, but also in some non-Islamic countries, for example, the USA, Canada, China, Greece, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Egypt, Guatemala, Israel, Peru, Venezuela and some European countries such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom (see Jafri, 2008; Howe, 2008; Khan, 2006; Unicef, 2000). It is estimated that at least 5000 women and girls worldwide are murdered each year in the name of so-called honour (*United Nations Population Fund*, 2000). Although honour killing is being reported worldwide, some regions are particularly in the news, such as South Asia and the Middle East (Mayell, 2002; *United Nations Population Fund*, 2000).

Khan (2006: 11) suggests that with the release of a shocking documentary by CNN on 7 December 1995, honour killing became a subject of debate all over the world. The documentary was about honour-related crimes/killings in the Muslim Arab communities residing in Israeli and Palestinian territories, with the title *Honour Killing: A Brutal Tribal Custom*, and created an impression that honour killing is peculiar to Muslim countries. A number of researchers have argued that honour-related crimes and killings also occur beyond the Arab domain and ‘it is by no means endemic to the religion of Islam or tied to any particular group’ (Lang, 2000: 55). However, Fisk (*The Independent*, 7 September 2010) describes such killings as: ‘the crime wave throughout the Middle East and South Asia that shames the world’. Denying such a claim is not easy as ‘More than 90 per cent of cases of honour related violence against women are reported from Muslim countries or among Muslim communities living in non-Muslim states’ (Khan (2006: 9). Indeed, in countries such as the USA, the UK and Canada and European countries, many cases of honour killing have been reported. Dyer (2015: 22–25) argues that the three cities in the UK – London, Bradford and Birmingham – with the highest number of residents of Pakistani origin also ranked as the three UK cities with the highest number of honour killings or attempted honour killings. She further elaborates: ‘Of the 22 out of 29 reported cases of honour killings and attempted killings from 2010 where the ethnicity of the victims is known or alleged, 15 were of Pakistani origin, three of Indian, one of Bangladeshi, one of white British’. Interestingly, the term ‘honour killing’ entered the British legal system in 2003, when Abdullah Yones (a Muslim Iraqi who had fled Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in 1999 with his family) pleaded guilty to killing his sixteen-year-old daughter Heshu (Rose, 2009: 5). In the context of North America, Tripp (2012) reports that the honour killing toll reached at least fifteen in Canada over the past two decades and that most honour killings also happen in migrant Muslim families. Similarly, the articles, case studies and research papers written about honour killing in the United States present evidence that cases of honour killing happen amongst migrants, of whom the majority were Muslim (see Avalon, 2008; Smith, 2013; Tripp, 2012).

Despite the statistics showing that honour killings are being reported from all over the world, a number of rather shocking news reports of honour killing in Muslim countries are often heard, such as the video of the killing of seventeen-year-old Du’a Khalil Aswad from the Kurdish area of Northern Iraq, available on YouTube. The blurry video shows several men kicking her and throwing rocks at her as she tries to hide her blood-covered face and body. At one point,

she struggles to sit up, but a man's kick forces her to fall again and then a large concrete block hitting her on the head thrown by another man ends her life. According to Zebari (*Agence France Presse*, 5 May 2007): 'several uniformed police officers, standing on the edge of the crowd were watching while the mob were filming the violent assault on their phones and cheering and shouting with pleasure'. This brutal public murder was indeed an act of honour killing by her uncles and a brother who believed that she deserved such a fate because she had fallen in love with a man belonging to a different religious sect. Likewise, *the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan*³² in its annual report (2012) declared that in 2011, a Belgian court had sentenced four members of a Pakistani family to prison for the murder of their daughter, who defied them by living with a Belgian man and refusing an arranged marriage. In a more recent case of honour killing in Lahore (Pakistan) in May 2013, a woman called Farzana was beaten to death with bricks by her natal family for marrying the man she loved. Her husband, Muhammed Iqbal, begged nearby police for help but the police did not intervene. This happened on a busy street outside the provincial High Court where Farzana had gone to seek protection. The explicit video of the murder can be seen on YouTube. While I am writing these lines, *The Independent* (29 September 2015) has published a report that a Pakistani man strangled his daughter, nineteen-year-old Lareeb, to death as a matter of honour in Berlin (Germany) after learning of her affair with a young Muslim man in the German town of Darmstadt. The mother of the girl assisted her husband in hiding her dead body. The couple is facing trial at a district court in Germany for the joint murder of their daughter. Regrettably, there has been a long series of brutal murders called honour killing perpetrated by Muslim families, living either in Islamic or non-Islamic countries. '91 per cent of honor killings are committed by Muslims worldwide' (Sweeney, 2011) and '95 per cent of honor killings in the West are perpetrated by Muslim fathers and brothers or their proxies' (Kay, 2011).

The United Nations' landmark Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, along with the International Bill of Rights for Women, known as CEDAW³³ (18 December 1979), calls on states to establish the mechanisms necessary to combat the abuse of women's human rights to prevent and eliminate honour killings and to punish perpetrators. In this context, on 4 March 2010, REAL³⁴ released a report stating that 'some 5,000 women are

³² *HRCP*.

³³ *The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*.

³⁴ *Responsible for Equality and Liberty Organisation*.

murdered in honour killings by their families every year'. Honour violence against women is now a globally recognised gendered social problem and there is a huge literature focusing on it. Feminist research and activism have played a major part in changing perceptions of the problem since the 1970s. Because many countries do not see this issue from a feminist perspective, in response to such violence their laws are still ineffective at curbing the danger.

Pakistan is allegedly among those countries notorious for an epidemic of honour killings: 'Women are murdered every day in Pakistan for perceived slights against conservative social traditions. The crime is so common it rarely rates more than a paragraph in newspapers' (Hourel, 2014). In fact, nearly all published studies mention that the numbers of recorded cases of honour killing are far fewer than those of unreported or unrecorded cases. The Indian sub-continent has a long history of various forms of gendered violence, with traditions such as *sati*³⁵ and *jauhar*³⁶ and contemporary forms of lethal violence against women. In Pakistan such violence is not limited to honour killing; other forms of violence such as dowry deaths and rape are also frequently reported.

Honour Killing in Pakistan

Although killing women or motivating women to kill themselves to save the honour of the family or the tribe is rooted in the sub-continent, the thought-provoking fact is that, until the end of British rule in India and the emergence of Pakistan on 14 August 1947 up until 1990, the term honour killing was uncommon to the extent that 'the people at large were not even acquainted with the term of honour killing' (Hyder, 2000: 38). Whilst cases of gender and domestic violence and sexual harassment were often reported and discussed, because of the social norm that telling about family misbehaviour was/is a taboo, victimized women were either reluctant or scared or were discouraged by other family members from reporting cases against their oppressors. However, domestic violence did not bring rampant killings under the pretext of honour crime on a large scale.

In fact, until the end of General Zia's regime in 1988, 'nothing in particular was mentioned

³⁵ *Sati*, a Hindi word, literally meaning a chaste woman but was applied in Hindu communities to a woman who self-immolated on her husband's funeral pyre either voluntarily or by use of force or coercion.

³⁶ *Jauhar* literally means 'ability' in the Urdu and Hindi languages but 'doing *jauhar*' is an idiom in Urdu language which means committing suicide by immolation along with the family to save family from dishonour.

about the peculiar form of violence now called honour killing in modern terminology' (Khan, 2006: 148). From 1990 onwards, with the alarming rise in honour based killings, first the international and then the Pakistani print media, especially those published in Sindhi and English, as well as progressive thinkers and writers, began registering their protests against the severe violation of human rights known as honour killings. Honour killing is recognised as a strong tradition and norm: if the honour (according to the specific cultural definition) of a family, community or tribe is violated, the affected persons are considered to be within their rights to kill the offenders/adulterers to save their honour. The common view of honour killings is that these include killing of the women who caused shame to the family, and to which men must react accordingly.

A variety of social, cultural and behavioural reasons for honour killing are listed by Bhanbhro *et al.* (2013), including: a man wishing to remarry may kill his wife as *kari* (Aftab *et al.*, 2008; Actionaid, 2012); a girl married to a man outside her clan/caste/tribe; a woman who was talking to a strange man or someone who is not close relative; admiring any male except husband, father or brother; frequent visits of any male from outside the family to the house; women wearing make-up without any special occasion such as wedding or Eid;³⁷ frequently taking a shower and wearing new clothes in absence of her husband; expressing a desire to choose a spouse or marrying someone without the family's permission (*PDI*,³⁸ 2005) and settling disputes with opponents (Shoro: 1997).

The act of honour killing is performed in Pakistan under numerous names, as stated by Warraich (2005: 78): 'in Panjab, *kala-kali*, in Sindh *karo-kari*,³⁹ in Baluchistan, *siahkari*, and in Khyber Pakhtoonkhawah it is called *taurtoora*'. Methods of killings vary across the country. According to Bains (2010): 'women are brutally sliced, poisoned, strangled, burnt, stoned, flogged or whipped'. *IRIN*⁴⁰ Asia reports that in 'North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, the victim of honour killing can be hacked, stabbed, burned, shot and stoned to death. Sometimes the *kari* is taken to a mountain and her neck is broken. A *kari* woman is most severely tortured before being killed' (Bhatti: 2000: 95)⁴¹ and buried in a

³⁷ One of the religious festivals in Islam, one is celebrated at the end of the month of Ramadan.

³⁸ *Participatory Development Initiative*.

³⁹ This term was initially used in Sindhi but now it is also being used in Urdu for honour killing.

⁴⁰ *Integrated Regional Information Networks*, 9 January 2003.

⁴¹ My translation.

pecially-made hidden *kari* graveyard.⁴² In 2008, in Baluchistan, as many as five women were buried alive.⁴³ In Punjab province the usual mode of honour killing is shooting. In Sindh, *karis* are taken to the bank of the river where either they are shot or cut into pieces, and are thrown in river. It is also reported that the bodies of the honour victims are thrown in the river after tying their hands and feet with heavy stones.⁴⁴ Apart from throwing from a mountain, pushing in the river, shooting and slaughtering with an axe (Hina, 2000; Hoodbai, 2000; Khan, 2006), chopping off the body parts of the *karis* with sharp razors and axes is also reported.⁴⁵

The first official report in which data about honour killing is shown was presented by *HRCP*, which states that, in 1998, its special task force received information about 196 cases of honour killing, in which 226 people were murdered. On 22 September 1999, Amnesty International reported that hundreds of women were being killed and that, due to the negligence of the authorities, women were forced to live in a state of fear and depression and it is the failure of the authorities to prevent these killings by not investigating and punishing the perpetrators. The same year, *Human Rights Watch* (1999) affirmed that approximately 70% to 90% of Pakistani women are subjected to domestic violence. According to a representative of *HRCP* (2014), 70% of the victims of honour killings are women, whilst 30% are men (Nosheen & Schellmann, 2011).

⁴² Some 30 years ago, in Lakhi Ghulam Shah (Shikarpur), a half-acre land was reserved as a graveyard for these *karis*. In the beginning, only Balochi *karis* were buried but now other *karis* are also allowed to bury. People are reluctant to go there. Once a mother was seen to offer prayer on a grave of her daughter who she believed was not a *kari*. When the news reached her home, she was tortured by her family members (Naqvi & Korai, 2000: 30-31), My translation.

⁴³ 'After reaching the deserted area of Nau Abadi, Abdul Sattar Umrani and his six companions took the three younger women out of the jeep and beat them before allegedly opening fire with their guns. The girls were seriously injured but were still alive at that moment. Sattar Umrani and his accomplices hurled them into a wide ditch and covered them with earth and stones. The two older women were an aunt of Fauzia, and the other the mother of one minor. When they protested and tried to stop the burial of the minors that were plainly alive, the attackers were so angry that they also pushed them into the ditch and buried all alive. After completing the burial, they fired several shots into to the air so that no one would come close' (*Asian Human Rights Commission*: August, 2008).

⁴⁴ *Kawish Newspaper*, June 2013.

⁴⁵ 'An old man was a witness to such an incident. He saw that a bloodthirsty man with the razor arrogantly walked to the right side of his victim, held her right ear tightly and sliced it off as her choking voice repeated 'I am innocent'. Wiping the blood from the razor on the dirty palm of his left hand, the man turned to the left ear and slashed it off amid screams beseeching him to pardon her. The nose and ears were then placed atop the victim's head and the man holding her hair slowly loosened his grip and walked away from the scene while the other two stretched her arms as if they would detach the limbs from her body. Amid her shrieks, the gunman took out his gun and pulled the trigger while others repeated their earlier words: 'this is the fate of the *kari*'. The bullet killed the girl instantly. She collapsed and the two men simultaneously lifted their legs and violently kicked the body away into the canal' (Najam, 2011).

Ali (2001: 3) reports that, in May 2001, Aaftab Nabi, the then Inspector General of Police (Sindh), admitted in an address that the average annual number of women murdered in the name of honour for the whole nation (Pakistan) ran to more than one thousand. A prominent columnist, Cowasjee (*Dawn*, 9 March 2003), reports that the total number of cases of honour killing in 2003 was 1,216. According to the government report of the Secretary-General of UNO (25 July 2006): ‘4,000 women and men were killed in Pakistan in the name of honour between 1998 and 2003, the number of women being more than double the number of men’ (UNIFEM,⁴⁶ 16 February 2007). *Dawn* (7 January 2005) published a report presented by the Prime Minister’s advisor on women’s development in which she calculated that, during 2004, as many as 1,250 women were killed in the name of honour.

Mir (*Dawn*, 3 September 2008) states that: ‘the number of honour killings in Pakistan is estimated to be around 2,500 to 3,000 cases every year’. The *HRCP* (2012) alternatively estimates that a thousand women and girls are victims of HMs⁴⁷ every year in Pakistan. In 2010 alone, 791 honour killing cases were recorded. The report of the Aurat Foundation for 2011-2012 highlights the growing scale of violence suffered by women in Pakistan. The report states, ‘in 2011, a total of 8,539 cases of violence against women were reported in the country, which is roughly 6.74 per cent higher than the cases reported during the previous year’. The report explains that most women were killed either by their brothers or by their husbands. Around 600 of the women killed in 2011 were accused of having illicit relations and 219 of marrying without permission. Some victims were raped or gang raped before being killed. The *International Journal of Asian Social Science* (2013: 1468) declared that in 2012 at least 913 women and girls were murdered in the name of honour in Pakistan, which constitutes seventeen HMs every week. Houreld (2014) reported that, in 2013, 869 cases of so-called honour killings were reported in the media. However: ‘In faraway villages such cases are never reported or are disguised as suicide’ (Mir, 2008). The dramatic rise in cases of honour killing since 1990 attracted the world’s attention towards the ineffective Pakistani law that does not deal with honour killing as murder. According to Goldenberg (1999):

Those who kill for honour in Pakistan are almost never punished. In the rare instances cases reach the courts; the killers are sentenced to just two or three years. Hina Jilani has collected 150 case studies and in only eight did the judges reject the argument that

⁴⁶ *The United Nations Development Fund for Women.*

⁴⁷ Honour Murders.

the women were killed for honour. All the other perpetrators were let off, or given reduced sentences. (Goldenberg, *The Guardian*, 27 May 1999)

In order to explore the rapid growth of honour killings and why the men who kill in the name of honour are not being given severe penalties for the murders, I shall next briefly look into the series of ordinances that were introduced to bring Pakistani laws into conformity with Islamic *Sharia* law and how these laws assisted gendered violence in Pakistan.

The Laws Relating to Honour Killing in Pakistan

‘Upon independence in 1947, Pakistan inherited the common law and criminal justice system modelled after the English legal system’ (Irfan, 2008: 8). It was the British Penal Code (1860) that became the formal legal system (statute, secular state law) of Pakistan. Chapter XVI of this code concerns ‘Offences affecting the human body’ and the sections from 299 to 331 therein related to ‘Offences affecting life’, defining murder as follows:

*Qatl-e-amd*⁴⁸ whoever, with the intention of causing death or with the intention of causing bodily injury to a person, by performing an act which in the ordinary course of nature is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that his act is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, causes the death of such person, is said to commit intentional murder. (PPC,⁴⁹ Chapter XVI, Section 300: 1860)

A perusal of the above section reveals that it has two aspects. First, *mens rea*,⁵⁰ which means that if the intention of killing is there but the act is not performed, then there is no offence. Second, *actus rea*,⁵¹ which means that if the act is performed without intention, it is *khata*⁵² but not an offence. According to this law, if someone intentionally kills a person (on any pretext) it could be considered a murder.

However, through the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* 1990, the punishment for killing and intentional murder as *qisas* was inserted into the Pakistani Penal Code with the intention of bringing Pakistani law into accordance with *Sharia* law. Thus, sections 299 to 338 of the PPC were given Arabic terminology and an Islamic interpretation. Section 302 of the PPC now

⁴⁸ Intentional murder.

⁴⁹ Pakistan Penal Code.

⁵⁰ Intention.

⁵¹ A criminal act.

⁵² Accident.

defines the punishment of *qatl-e-amd* as whoever commits intentional murder shall be subject to the provisions of this chapter;

a: punished with death as *qisas*;

b: punished with death or imprisonment for life as *ta'zir*;⁵³ or

c: punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend up to twenty-five years.

However, the Islamic command relating to the term *qisas* has been laid down in the Holy Qur'an, the prime source of Islamic law as follows:

Therein we decreed for them a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a wound for a wound. But if a man charitably forebears from retaliation, his remission shall atone for them. (*Qur'an*, 5: 45)

In the above verse, the punishment has been prescribed in proportion to the offence. The degree of the punishment is equal to the gravity of the offence. An eye for an eye and a life for a life, but this does not mean that an individual has a right to *qisas*. Here, retaliation implies justice through a court by observing all legal formalities and presenting proper evidence but according to the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance*, the punishment for intentional murder and honour killing is *qisas*. The term has been defined by section 299, sub-section (k):

Qisas means punishment by causing similar hurt in the same part of the body of the convict as he has caused to the victim or by causing his death if he has committed *qatl-e-amd* in exercise of the right of the victim or a *wali*.⁵⁴

Thus, this ordinance has deep and far-reaching implications. It is interpreted to mean that, if the legal heir of the deceased does not want to exercise his right, the death penalty cannot be awarded. And if the legal heirs of the deceased compromise with the killer, they can withdraw their right of *qisas* and therefore there is no death penalty. Hence, the law has been codified in the following two sections of the Pakistan Penal Code *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance*.

⁵³ Penal.

⁵⁴ An adult legal heir.

a: In the case of *qatl-e-amd*, an adult sane *wali* may, at any time and without any compensation, waive his right of *qisas* (Section 309-1).

b: In the case of *qatl-e-amd*, an adult sane *wali* may, at any time on accepting *badl-e-sulh*,⁵⁵ waive his right of *qisas* (Section 310 -1).

In addition to this, in section 300 of the PPC, there is an exemption of ‘grave and sudden provocation’, defined as unintentional murder: ‘A male relative can also kill a woman on the pretext of ‘sudden provocation’ or ‘fit of anger’ or ‘heat of passion’ (Khan, 2006: 175). Because of this plea, honour killing is not considered murder, which facilitates offenders by awarding them mitigated and mild punishments such as imprisonment for a few years. The following verdicts provide evidence to help in understanding how the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* can be changed into the plea of ‘grave and sudden provocation’ to give further protection to the killers in cases of honour killing. In 1994, in *Ghulam Yasin v/s The State*, the judges of Lahore Court held that:

It is obvious that a murder committed on account of *ghairat* (honour) is not the same as *qatl-e-amd* (deliberate murder), pure and simple and the persons found guilty of *qatl*,⁵⁶ committed on account of *ghairat*, do deserve concession, which must be given to them. (cited in Warraich, 2005: 90)

The above decision of the Lahore High Court became the major precedent for honour killers to escape the net of the law. In *Sardar Muhammad v/s the State 1997*, some judges of the Lahore High Court almost declared honour killing lawful. The court held that:

In such a situation, the appellant, being the father of Ms X, one of the deceased, was overpowered by the wave of his family *ghairat* and killed both the deceased on the spot. In my opinion, he has committed no offence liable to punishment. (cited in Warraich, 2005: 95)

The above are just two examples in which members of the higher judiciary have not viewed honour killing as murder, but seem to see it as a system of customary justice in the name of Islam. Nonetheless, the following judgment of the *Shariat* Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the case of *Federation of Pakistan v/s Gul Hassan* in 1989 did not carry the

⁵⁵ In lieu of peace. Compoundable offences are those in which the parties to a dispute can reach a compromise and proven killers can seek or buy pardon from the victim’s family.

⁵⁶ Killing.

exemption of grave and sudden provocation, but while giving its observations, the court itself conditionally allowed the plea of grave and sudden provocation.

Taking the example of a man committing murder after seeing his wife committing *zina*, the court noted that the maximum penalty for *zina* is death; thus upon the condition that he provides proof in conformity with the required standards of evidence under Islam, he would be exempted from a death sentence under *qisas*. (See Warraich, 2005: 88)

A perusal of the above observation shows that the court almost legitimized honour killing on the basis of *zina*. Since the punishment for *zina* is death under the *Zina Ordinance* 1979, killing someone committing *zina* was seen by the honourable judges as administering justice. The relevant sections of the offence of *zina* from the enforcement of *Hudood Ordinance*, 1979 Section 5 (2) declares that ‘whoever is guilty of *zina*, liable to *had*,⁵⁷ shall, subject to the provisions of the following ordinance’:

a: if he or she is a *muhsan*,⁵⁸ be *rajam*⁵⁹ at a public place.

b: if he or she is *not-muhsan*,⁶⁰ be punished in a public place with whipping numbering one hundred stripes.

There have been debates about whether *rajam* is an Islamic punishment or not as it is not found in the Holy Qur’an. However, the Qur’an does prescribe the punishment for adultery (*zina*) in *Soorah Noor*⁶¹ as follows: ‘The adulterer and the adulteress, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes’. Despite the fact that the punishment of stoning to death⁶² cannot be

⁵⁷ ‘Limit or prohibition; pl. *hudud*. A punishment fixed in the Qur’an and *hadith* for crimes considered to be against the rights of God. The six crimes for which punishments are fixed are: theft (amputation of the hand), illicit sexual relations (death by stoning or one hundred lashes), making unproven accusations of illicit sex (eighty lashes), drinking intoxicants (eighty lashes), apostasy (death or banishment), and highway robbery (death). Strict requirements for evidence (including eyewitnesses) have severely limited the application of *hudud* penalties’ (Esposito, 2003).

⁵⁸ Married.

⁵⁹ An Arabic word for stoning to death.

⁶⁰ Unmarried.

⁶¹ *Sūrat an-Nūr* (The Light) is the 24th *Sura* of the Qur’an with 64 Ayat.

⁶² The first conviction and sentence of stoning to death, in September 1981, was a conviction for adultery of a thirteen-year-old blind girl, Safia Bibi, who was allegedly raped by her employer and his son. It was cancelled after bitter public criticism. Another conviction for *zina* and the sentence of stoning to death of Shahida Parveen and Muhammad Sarwar in early 1988 sparked more public outrage and led to a retrial and acquittal by the Federal *Sharia* Court. In this case the trial court took the view that notice of divorce by Shahida’s former husband, Khushi Muhammad, should have been given to the Chairman of the local council, as stipulated under Section 7 (3) of the *Muslim Family Laws Ordinance*, 1961. This section states that any man who divorces his

found in the Qur'an, it was introduced in Pakistan. However, it was overturned after huge national and international pressure. Khan (2006: 41) argues that with the proclamation of the *Zina Ordinance*, for the first time in Pakistan's history, illicit sex became a crime against the state and it was made non-compoundable, non-bailable and punishable by death. Hussaini (2009: 112) argues that the most appalling aspect of the *Zina Ordinance* is that 'a rape victim can be prosecuted for adultery if she cannot produce four male witnesses to the assault'. That law opened up new opportunities for sex offenders and criminals, as it was next to impossible for a woman to gather four eyewitnesses to prove a sex assault or offence against her. Khan (2007) explains that data for the years 1994 to 1996 from the women's police station in Karachi suggest that as many as 80% of cases registered in those years were for *zina*. From 1979 to 1995, more than one million *zina* cases were filed with the police and 300,000 heard by the courts. Thousands of women were incarcerated for years on charges of helping in an abduction or elopement.

The irony of the situation is, how can a raped woman produce 'four truthful' and 'abstaining from major sins' eyewitnesses as section 8 (b) of the ordinance demands? And they all 'must have witnessed the penetration' (Jafri, 2008; Khan, 2006; Warraich, 2005). As a result, women preferred to keep silent even when they were gang raped. However, these ordinances were not the only discriminatory acts that paved the way for the extreme violence against women in order to push them to the state of segregation in Pakistan. Simultaneously, some judgments from the higher judiciary interpreted the laws as legitimating honour killing. The judges linked one verse of the Qur'an, which is famous as, 'the concept of *qawam*'.⁶³ The Qur'an (4: 34) reads, 'Men have *qawam* over women because God has made the one superior to the other and because they spend their wealth to maintain them'. Some members of the judiciary have interpreted this verse in a completely different manner in order to benefit those accused of honour killing. For instance, in the case of *Muhammad Faisal v/s the State*, the court held that:

The question is whether the plea of 'grave and sudden provocation' is still available or not, the answer is to be found in the Qur'anic injunctions contained in verse 34 of *Surah Nisa* ordaining that, 'Men are in charge of women'. A husband, father and the brothers are supposed to guard the life and honour of the females, who are inmates of the house and when anyone of them finds a trespasser committing *zina* with a woman

wife must register it with the Union Council. Otherwise, the court concluded that the divorce stood invalidated and the couple became liable to conviction under the *Zina Ordinance*.

⁶³ Authority.

of his family, then murder by him whilst deprived of self-control will not amount to *qatl-e-amd* liable to *qisas* because the deceased in such a case is not a *masoom-ud-dam*⁶⁴. (cited in Patel, 2010: 97)

This verse of the Qur'an certainly indicates the physical and financial superiority of males over females, but it by no means gives power to fathers, brothers and husbands to kill their women by taking the law into their own hands. In the situation of honour killing, the court discussed the conduct of the deceased and raised the question of whether the deceased was or was not *masoom-ud-dam*.⁶⁵ This shows that the judge is of the view that, if the deceased was an adulterer, the killer should receive a lesser punishment because, from the point of view of the court, the killing of an adulterer is not murder. Many instances can be found of the free play of masculine interpretations of the law and sacred texts among the higher judiciary of Pakistan. This provision is in accordance with the *Sharia* law, which is mentioned in a manual of Islamic law certified as a reliable guide to Sunni orthodoxy by Al-Azhar University: 'retaliation is obligatory against anyone who kills a human being purely intentionally and without right'. However, 'not subject to retaliation' is 'a father or mother (or their fathers or mothers) for killing their offspring, or offspring's offspring' (*Umdat al-Salik* o1.1-2, cited in Spencer, 2009). In other words, someone who kills his child incurs no legal penalty under Islamic law (see Geller, 2015; Spencer, 2009). Honour killing is sanctioned in many Muslim countries. For instance, the Palestinian authorities give pardons or suspend sentences for honour murders. In Iraq, honour murderers get off lightly. The recent Syrian law states that a man can still benefit from extenuating circumstances in crimes of honour provided, in the case of killing, he serves a prison term of about two years (see Geller, 2015; Spencer, 2009).

The Government of General Pervaiz Musharraf⁶⁶ brought some amendments to the Criminal Law. The Bill 2004 (I of 2005), Section 3 states, 'Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to the offence of intentional murder, if committed in the name or on the pretext of honour, and the same shall fall within the ambit of (a) and (b), as the case may be'. The amendment implies that murder generally, and honour killing in particular, is to be punished under sub-sections (a) and (b) of section 302 of the PPC. However, as the Criminal Law

⁶⁴ Innocent.

⁶⁵ Adulterer.

⁶⁶ Pervez Musharraf seized control of the government of Pakistan through a military coup in 1999, relinquished his role as Chairman of the joint chiefs in 2001 and was tenured as the tenth President of Pakistan from 2001 until 2008.

Amendment Bill 2004 does not address the issue of waiving and compounding under the *Qisas and Diyat* law, the perpetrators of honour killing continue to escape punishment. Hussaini (2009) states that:

A United Nations' committee noted that so-called honour crimes are on the increase in Pakistan even though the country passed a law banning these crimes in 2004. The committee questioned the sincerity of the Pakistani government in ending these crimes and prosecuting people who are guilty of these murders, and charges the Pakistani government with being 'lenient and tolerant' towards such crimes. (Hussaini, 2009: 112–113)

The law still treats *karo-kari* as a compoundable offence; therefore, killers compound⁶⁷ the offence with the complainant (the victim's family) and are not prosecuted. Since the killers themselves are the injured party or the complainant (of the killed/victim), consequently the murderer has to be forgiven. As the whole, Pakistan's legal documents and laws are lenient towards honour killing and honour killers, therefore so is the prosecution process. The prosecution agencies, being part of the same system and culture, deal with matters of honour killing as a routine affair, rather than murder.

The Prosecution Process

Prosecution for honour killing cases in Pakistan is a triangle made up of the legal heirs of the deceased, the police and advocates (state counsel versus defence counsel). The prosecution begins with the lodging of a case at a police station by the legal heirs. Regrettably, in most cases, the legal heirs of the deceased are close relatives of the accused. Paradoxically, the legal heirs of the deceased are also the legal heirs of the accused. According to the *HRCP*, the persons accused of honour killings between 1998 and 2002 involved 462 brothers, 395 husbands, 103 fathers, 58 sons, 217 other relatives, and 44 unknown persons (cited in Irfan, 2008: 10). The victims (women) are the most vulnerable members of the family or community. 'In some cases of honour killing the killer himself surrenders at a police station along with the murder weapon and makes confession just for the sake of formality'⁶⁸ (Hyder, 2000: 5), as he knows that eventually he will be freed by the law. This is the point under which, as Amnesty International (2002) describes it: 'under '*Qisas and Diyat*' honour killing

⁶⁷ Seek pardon.

⁶⁸ My translation.

has the status of almost no crime'. Patel (2010: 93) therefore suggests that: 'the law should be reviewed regarding the compounding of the offence under the *Qisas and Diyat* ordinance because the next of kin in most honor killing cases are actually among the conspirators'.

It is the official responsibility of a state counsel to pursue a case as soon as the complaint reaches the courts. Before the trial begins, there is usually a bail application by the defence counsel. The court, in most cases, gives consent for bail and the accused is released from prison. When the trial begins, the court relies on police papers and witnesses. Both are normally defective due to one or more reasons. The state counsels are government employees, and whether they perform well or badly in court, their employment is not affected so they sometimes collude with the defence counsels. As a result, they do not take the required interest in these cases in terms of the collection of relevant evidence and the accused benefit from these omissions. As Jafri (2008: 116) comments: 'Even lawyers and judges, professionals trained in the modern legal ways, found it impossible to resist the pull of their traditions and culture.'

As far as the role of the police is concerned, Shah (*News Line*, 22 January 1993) states that every police station has a fixed price for not registering a case against any killer in cases of honour killing. This means that a man can simply kill a woman or both the woman and man (*karo and kari*), appear at the police station, pay a fixed sum and move on freely. She confirms that, until 1993, in Kashmir⁶⁹ the police used to take RS7,000 for not registering a case of *karo-kari* against the killers and that is the reason why Kashmir is not on the list of districts where *karo-kari* is most common. Similarly, Jacobabad's police stations are considered gold mines because in this area every month 50 to 60 cases of *karo-kari* happen but the police seldom register any of them. Shaikh (2000: 63) adds that in Jacobabad district the police charge up to RS100,000 for not registering a case of honour killing. Khan (2006) argues that the police are part of society and live in a culture in which killing for honour is considered commendable rather than condemnable. Consequently they treat honour killing and other cases of violence against women as a traditional matter. In addition, in cases of physical and sexual violence against women, medical evidence is central to the successful prosecution of

⁶⁹A district of upper Sindh.

both sexual and other bodily assault in domestic violence cases. The flawed and insensitive medico-legal system is discussed by Bhatti *et al.*:

The fact that in rape cases Pakistani courts generally require positive proof of penetration as well as physical evidence, such as genital injuries, to corroborate the victim's testimony to the nonconsensual nature of the intercourse renders timely and meticulous medico-legal examination of victims. In light of these requirements, Pakistan does not have an efficient and reliable medico-legal system. (Bhatti *et al.*, 2011: 155)

Patel (2010) comments upon the poor standard of investigation and the limitations of the technical expertise employed in the forensic investigation of crimes.

The prosecutor in such cases does not pursue these diligently. In addition, the investigative process is poor and the facilities and technical expertise for forensic investigation are extremely limited. Unnecessary delay in obtaining reports deters the trial. In most cases there is little cooperation from families of the victims because *karo-kari* is rarely considered a crime. (Patel, 2010: 100)

In regards to delayed and mishandled processing, Bhatti *et al.* state:

In addition to the discriminatory laws, the judicial system exacerbates the problem by failing to view violence against women as a serious violation of women's human rights. The judicial system is rife with serious flaws, which fails to protect women as victims of violence and to prosecute perpetrators, as it is permeated with gender bias. (Bhatti *et al.*, 2011: 154)

The main reason for the lack of interest of the police and legal prosecutors in all types of atrocities against women, including honour killing, is that, despite some amendments in the *Hudood Ordinance* (1979) and *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* (1990), the laws still favour the honour killers. 'We are calling for this law to be changed', Hina Jilani, a human rights lawyer, told *IRIN* (9 January 2003) from Lahore. In fact, the discriminatory ordinances were not openly criticised by the print and electronic media at the time of their implementation because the media were virtually crippled during the Martial Law of General Zia. The majority of the country's journalists, intellectuals and liberal groups could not speak out against unjust laws because of the fear of being called either a Western-influenced or anti-Islamic person. Pro-army pseudo-intellectuals misinterpreted Islamic laws and regulations in the country (Patel, 2003; Hussaini, 2009). After the death of General Zia in 1988, the secular groups of society

became stronger. Various human rights organizations and media, within and outside the country, started writing and speaking out against honour killing and putting pressure on the government to enact major amendments in the laws related to honour killing in order to hold those responsible for it accountable under the law.

Civil Society and Media

Any freedom of the media whatsoever in Pakistan has been achieved through a long struggle. Khan (2006: 292) rightly states that: ‘the secular/ liberal activism originated in the early 1980s as a reaction to the implementation of some discriminatory religious laws by the military dictatorship’. These laws attracted much criticism from lawyers, civil society, women activists and human rights groups. Some organizations, with the support of various NGOs, brought cases of honour killing to the notice of the world. With the restoration of what the West calls ‘dense democracy’, some liberal women and organizations maintained their views against practices such as *karo-kari*. Newspapers and magazines (mostly those in Sindhi and English) published features and tried to educate people about the extreme violence against women. Asma Jahangir describes the role of the media and civil society in the following words:

We have been fighting honour killings for many, many years. It doesn't automatically become an international issue – you have to really keep the flag flying, to work the media as well as the courts. It's very important for a human rights activist to be media-friendly. They want news. And so whatever you do, there has to be news in it; even though you are giving them new statistics, are you giving them a new face? Are you giving them a new story? A new story makes new news. It was through the media that honour killings became a front burner, an international issue. (*Centre for Justice and Human Rights*, 2000)

Pakistani civil society's role as an emerging progressive society is being acknowledged due to the efforts of some liberal stalwarts. In this regard, the names of two leading human rights defenders, lawyer sisters Asma Jahangir⁷⁰ and Hina Jeelani,⁷¹ will always be given due respect

⁷⁰ Asma Jahangir is a founding member of the *HRCP* and has served as Secretary-General and later Chairperson of the organization. On 27 October 2010, Jahangir was elected as President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan and played a prominent role in the Lawyers' Movement. She has co-chaired the South Asia Forum for Human Rights and was the vice president of the International Federation of Human Rights.

⁷¹ Hina Jilani is a lawyer and a civil society activist. She is also one of the founders of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Women's Action Forum (a pressure group established in 1980 campaigning against discriminatory legislation). In February 1980 she, with her sister Asma Jahangir, co-founded Pakistan's first all-

for their efforts to prevent the persecution of religious minorities, women and children. They mobilized Pakistani people against the so-called *Hudood Ordinance*, blasphemy laws and the *Zina Ordinance*. Asma Jahangir displayed hope in an interview:

Eventually things will have to get better. However, the way they will improve is not going to be because of the government or the political leadership or the institutions of our country, most of which have actually crumbled. It will be the people of the country themselves who will bring about the change in society because they have had to struggle to fend for themselves at every level. (*Time Magazine*, 2003)

Along with the two sisters, some individual luminaries such as barristers Aitzaz Ahsan Mehnaz Rehman, Ayaz Latif Palijo, Zia Awan, Ansar Burney and Shahnaz Bukhari have been struggling since the time of the military dictatorship of General Zia, who imposed the governing system that suited only dictators, extremists and fundamentalists. In various Pakistani cities, women's organizations such as War against Rape, the Pakistan Women Lawyers' Association, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Women's Action Forum, Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gah, Aurtazad, and the Zia Awan Foundation are working. A number of books, research theses and articles about domestic violence, gender discrimination and honour crime and killing have been written and published within and outside Pakistan. Very effective drama serials against *karo-kari*, and the ineffectiveness of the legal system in this regard, have been shown on television. Writers such as Jamal Abro, Abdul Quadir Junejo, Noor-ul-Huda Shah, Shoukat Shoro, Rana Farooquie and Shahnaz Shoro have written touching stories against *karo-kari*. Well-known Pakistani poets, Shaikh Ayaz, Mahmood Shaam and others, have also written moving poems for couples or individuals, who were declared *karo-kari* before being killed. However, the most important role to highlight honour killings was enabled by foreign-funded organizations. Khan (2006) discusses their role and appearance:

Most of the liberal female volunteer activists were approached by foreign donors to form formal platforms (NGOs) with the assistance of funding for the purpose of research on issues and status of Pakistani women as well as for putting pressure on the government to give due attention to women's situation, a new venue of activism which can be called paid/salaried activism. (Khan, 2006: 293)

female legal aid practice, Legal Aid Cell in Lahore, and also founded Pakistan's first legal aid centre in 1986. She also helped to set up a shelter for women fleeing violence and abuse, called *Dastak* in 1991.

However, in the Pakistani context, I agree with Khan (2006) that the rapid growth of foreign-funded women's organizations in rural and urban areas has created doubts about their agenda among the general public. In fact these foreign-funded organizations need more sincere and genuine approaches to reach the people and understand the complicated issues to draw the road map and work honestly for a genuine change in Pakistani society. However, their role is still appreciated, as they have at least brought some basic realities about gender discrimination and honour crimes against women to the attention of the world. Nonetheless, at a time when Human Rights Risk Atlas 2011 puts Pakistan as the third most dangerous country in the world for women after DR Congo and Somalia, many human rights workers are either killed, commit suicide or are forced into exile.

It is indeed a huge task to change the attitudes and thoughts of the people about gender, social, economic and political equality in a country such as Pakistan, where whatever is said in the name of Islam is accepted by the majority of people without enquiring about its relevance with Islam. In this scenario, creating awareness about the rights of women and the realities of honour killing are certainly great challenges and a big campaign against *karo-kari* is still required. It needs to be effective to the extent that the authorities should be compelled to nullify laws that have so far been an integral part of the Pakistani judicial system. Sadly, the efforts of the media in terms of putting pressure on the supreme authorities to bring about appropriate changes or to repeal the present laws in order to curb honour killing have been unsuccessful.

Governments' and Parliamentarians' Attitudes towards Honour Killing

It took a while for Pakistan's political parties to restore democracy. However, it was not easy for any of the subsequent governments to uproot the ordinances that had been part of the Pakistani judicial system. As a matter of fact, succeeding governments failed to repeal or amend the laws shrewdly incorporated by General Zia and his supporters. Whenever successive political parties proposed small amendments, not only religious groups but also the religio-political parties staged large-scale demonstrations, calling any changes in the existing laws un-Islamic and unacceptable. Despite all the efforts, the evidence indicates that General Zia's policies are still embedded in Pakistani society and have a profound influence on the

Pakistani people. Kennedy (1996: 49) argues that: ‘Although Benazir Bhutto⁷² was an outspoken opponent of Zia’s Islamisation, she did not dismantle the Federal *Shariat* Court, the *Shariat* Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court, nor repeal the *Hudood Ordinance*’. However, this was mainly due to the presence of very strong fundamentalist factions inside and outside the upper and lower houses of the government.

In 1999, there was an uproar from various liberal, women’s and human rights’ organizations throughout the world against more than 300 reported cases of honour killing in Pakistan, including the much-highlighted murder of 29-year-old Samia Sarwar⁷³ by her family, in the Lahore office of her lawyers Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani. Asma Jahangir was also attacked but survived, and was later heavily criticised by extremists. The role of the Pakistani government and parliamentarians can be understood through the words of Goldenberg (*The Guardian*, 27 May 1999): ‘The members of Pakistan’s Upper House demanded punishment for the two sisters (Jahangir & Jilani) and none of Pakistan’s political leaders condemned the attack. The clergy in Peshawar wanted the two women to be put to death for trying to help Samia’. Abbas (1999) observed that the incident sparked a bitter debate in the country. The human and civil rights’ organizations, along with the women’s activist groups that have always been critical of the *Hudood* and *Qisas and Diyat Ordinances* and their reparations, demanded that the government amend, change or abolish the law so that these types of killing could be curbed.

Upon this reaction from various quarters, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party decided to move a resolution against honour killing in the senate in August 1999. When Iqbal Hyder, a senator of the Pakistan People’s Party, presented the resolution before the Upper House, the ruling party’s senators, belonging to the tribal region of Khyber

⁷² Benazeer Bhutto, (daughter of Zulfaquar Ali Bhutto, the very first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, hanged by the military dictator Zia-ul-Haq in 1979) was elected twice as Prime Minister of Pakistan, from 1988-1990 and from 1993-1996. She was assassinated on 27 December 2008 while campaigning for the Pakistani general election of 2008 in Rawal Pindi (Pakistan).

⁷³ Samia Sarwar was born into an affluent and educated family based in Peshawar. Her father, Ghulam Sarwar Khan Mohmand, was the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa province. Her mother, Sultana Sarwar, was a doctor with a successful practice in Peshawar. Samia Sarwar was a married woman with two children. She claimed to have suffered marital abuse and eloped with Nadir Mirza, an army officer. Samia then sought the help of Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani (lawyer sisters known as left-wing feminists). While at a meeting between Samia and her mother at their chamber in Lahore, Samia was shot dead by an assassin hired by Samia’s own mother, father and aunt (her mother’s sister, who was also her mother-in-law).

Pakhtoonkhuwah Province, resisted. Hussaini (2009: 109) quotes the words of Senator Ilyas Bilour: ‘We have fought for human rights and civil liberties all our lives but wonder what sort of human rights are being claimed by these girls in jeans’. According to the media reports, Israrullah Zahri⁷⁴ and Ajmal Khatak⁷⁵ virtually shouted at Iqbal Hyder for speaking against honour killing. Some of the senators were so incensed that they physically attacked Iqbal Hyder. Eventually, the Senate rejected the resolution with the support of 24 senators. Only four senators dared to support it. Iqbal Hyder later declared it ‘a sad day for democracy in Pakistan’. Abbas (*BBC Online*, 3 August 1999) reported that: ‘An international furor erupted when the Pakistani Senate rejected the resolution presented by the Pakistan People’s Party to condemn honour killings in the country’.

In December 2004, military ruler Pervez Musharraf’s regime presented a bill, The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004, which indicated that an offence committed on the pretext of honour would be punishable under the same penal provisions as murder, hardening the existing laws. It proposed either prison terms of seven years to life or the death penalty, depending upon the severity of the cases. The move sparked another debate amongst opposition parties, liberal organizations, women activists and human rights’ advocates. They held the opinion that the proposed legislative measure was too weak and would prove ineffective, therefore both the *Hudood Law* and the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* should be abolished. The bill passed, although the opposition liberal parties boycotted it. Jahangir argued that the bill would do little to stop honour killings: ‘The government bill is meaningless. It is a watered-down [bill] and we don’t accept that bill. We reject it outright. There is an emergency as far as women’s lives are concerned. And there is complete impunity in this country for anyone to kill a woman’ (*IRIN Asia*, 27 October 2004).

When the Pakistan Muslim League⁷⁶ came to power in 2005, it introduced a bill against *karo-kari* with some effective measures in parliament. But the then law Minister, Wasi Zafar, argued that after having passed an amendment bill in 2004, he did not see any need for more

⁷⁴ A tribal leader, member of the Baluchistan Awami National Party and Pakistani Senator from Baluchistan province.

⁷⁵ Ajmal Khatak (15 September 1925 – 7 February 2010) was a Pakistani politician, and the former President of the Awami National Party.

⁷⁶ A Pakistani Political party.

changes in the Pakistan penal code. His reaction increased suspicions about the ruling class's fundamentalist extremist elements and its intentions regarding honour killing.

In 2006, the Women's Protection Bill passed through Pakistan's Senate. The purpose of this bill was to see that offences against women, such as rape and non-marital consensual sex, be dealt with under criminal law by the civil courts instead of *Sharia* law by Islamic courts. This would eliminate the need for the four eyewitnesses and cases would be dealt with on the basis of evidence and forensics. The bill attracted scorching criticism right up to the last minute, but was eventually passed.

Nonetheless, in the following year, the *Asian Human Rights Commission* (2007) reported that: 'there has been no change in the number of incidents of violence against women since the bill came into force in 2006'. Constant accounts of honour killing in Pakistan were being reported by the Pakistani and international media, and in 2008 a boom in collective honour killing once again made Pakistan the centre of the news regarding the violation of human rights. As reported by Shah (*The Guardian*, 1 September 2008), three teenage girls of the Umrani⁷⁷ tribe, Hameeda, Raheema and Fouzia, along with two elderly women, left their home with the intention of marrying the men of their choice. The women were captured on the way by armed tribesmen of their clan and were taken to the desert where they were tortured and shot. According to Human Rights Watch, the three injured girls were thrown into a ditch while still alive with the two older women who were detained along with them in the same ditch in order to be punished. Thus, the five women were buried alive in the name of honour. This took place in Baluchistan, and the most prominent voice heard from the floor of the Baluchistan Parliament was that of Israrullah Zehri, who stated: 'These are our centuries-old traditions and I will continue to defend them'.

On 29 January 2010, President Asif Ali Zardari, who led the Pakistan People's Party government, signed the Protection against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Bill 2009, which the parliament adopted on 21 January 2010. On 19 December 2011, the Sindh Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to treat *karo-kari* as a non-compoundable and unpardonable offence and demanded of the federal government that *karo-kari* cases should be

⁷⁷ One of the Baloch tribes.

handled under Section 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code as murder. It was further demanded that the cases must be lodged by the police and to be prosecuted by the courts. Chandio (2011) reports that the Pakistan Peoples' Party's senior minister, Pir Mazhar-ul-Haque, became the spokesman for nearly all human rights organizations' long-demanded motto by saying: 'Whosoever is a killer, he should be charged under Section 302 of the PPC and a murder should be treated as murder'. The amended resolution, which was eventually passed, reads:

This assembly resolved that the Sindh government approaches the federal government to treat murder committed in the name of honour *karo-kari* as culpable homicide and amounting to murder and the culprits be charged and prosecuted under Section 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code and it should not be made compoundable. (Chandio, *The Nation*, 21 December 2011)

The President also signed two additional bills in December 2012, criminalising the primitive practices of *wani*,⁷⁸ *watta-satta*⁷⁹ and marriage with the Holy Qur'an,⁸⁰ which used women as tradable commodities for the settlement of disputes. In addition, the punishment for acid throwing was made stricter and was increased to life imprisonment, and the government further established a special task force in the interior Sindh region to take action against the practice of *karo-kari*, establishing helplines and offices in the districts of Sukkur, Jacobabad, Larkana and Khairpur. The Sindh Assembly passed a domestic violence (prevention and protection) bill on 8 March 2013. However, a report published in *Dawn* the next year said that as many as 421 cases of violence (Bhagwandas, 2014) were reported against women in just three months (July-September) of 2014. According to the report, 76 women were murdered for different reasons, with the number of those killed under the pretext of honour 57 (Kumar, 2015).

Despite the rising number of reported killings, activists have praised the Sindh parliament for passing this bill, which is aimed at strengthening women's protection against abuse. However,

⁷⁸ *Wani* means giving girls to someone for seeking pardon or peace. It is a cultural custom found in parts of Pakistan wherein young girls are forcibly married as part of the punishment for a crime (mostly honour killing) committed by her male relatives in order to save the men from being killed as *karos*.

⁷⁹ *Watta-satta*, literally means *give and take*, Exchanging girls in a girl for girl marriage. It is a form of bride exchange that is common in every province of Pakistan.

⁸⁰ Also known as *Haque Bakhsh*. According to a custom of Sindh province in Pakistan, in some families, especially Syed (who consider themselves upper-caste Muslims), in cases where they cannot find any suitable match, they cover the head of the girl and teach her the Holy Qur'an in a ceremony. The girl remains with the Qur'an for her whole life, and this is called marriage with the Qur'an. The practice is still continuing and the purpose is so as not to give a share of any inheritance to female members of the family.

human rights' activists say the government should do more to ensure that women subjected to violence, harassment and discrimination have effective access to justice. Perhaps, as Pakistan and its laws are fluctuating, shuffling and being interpreted in opposing ways between democratic government and dictators, it is difficult to see substantial progress regarding the implementation of appropriate amendments to the relevant laws in terms of eliminating honour killings. However, the present step taken by the Sindh Assembly is a long-awaited move in the right direction. It gives hope that the federal government will consider the move and listen to the voice of civil society to make the laws effective in protecting women from suppression and violence. Domestic violence in Pakistan is seldom recognized as a crime. Socially and officially it is viewed as a private, internal, family matter, which should not be interfered with. This is emphasized by the fact that Pakistani law is even more inadequate in protecting women victims of domestic violence and penalizing culprits. Not explicitly prohibited by any specific, targeted or distinct set of laws, most acts of domestic violence are encompassed by the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* of 1990, a body of Islamic criminal law dealing with murder, attempted murder, and the crime of causing bodily harm.

Women's Status in Pakistan and Sindh in Particular

The female population of Pakistan was last measured at 48.63% of the total population in 2013 by the World Bank. A report from the Thomas Reuters Foundation (2011) shows that, after Afghanistan and Congo, Pakistan is the world's most dangerous country for women due to a barrage of threats ranging from violence and rape to dismal health care and honour killings. *Human Rights Watch* (2011) and *HRCF* (2011) report that about 90% of women experience domestic violence in their lifetime and 1000+ women are victims of honour killing every year. The Human Development Report of the UNDP⁸¹ (2010) shows that Pakistani women earn 82% less than men. The overall situation of women in Pakistan is explained by Anderson (15 June 2011): 'Pakistani women are left with little, if any, protection from violence and discrimination. In addition to Pakistani laws being discriminatory, the judicial system condones and exacerbates the problem by failing to view violence against women as a serious violation of women's human rights'.

⁸¹ United Nations Development Program.

According to Article 37 of the Constitution of Pakistan, education is a fundamental right of every citizen, but gender discrepancies exist in the educational sector, as in every other field. According to the 2011 Human Development Report of the *UNDP* (2011), approximately twice as many males as females receive a secondary education in Pakistan. Below are the statistics collected for *UNESCO* by Latif (2011: 1):

Official statistics released by the Federal Education Ministry of Pakistan give a desperate picture of education for all, especially for girls. The overall literacy rate is 46 per cent, while only 26 per cent of girls are literate. Independent sources and educational experts, however, are skeptical. They place the overall literacy rate at 26 per cent and the rate for girls and women at 12 per cent, contending that the higher figures include people who can handle little more than a signature. There are 163,000 primary schools in Pakistan, of which merely 40,000 cater to girls. Of these, 15,000 are in Punjab Province, 13,000 in Sind, 8,000 in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and 4,000 in Baluchistan. Similarly, out of a total 14,000 lower secondary schools and 10,000 higher secondary schools, 5,000 and 3,000 respectively are for girls, in the same decreasing proportions as above in the four provinces. There are around 250 girls colleges, and two medical colleges for women in the public sector of 125 districts. Some 7 million girls under 10 go to primary schools, 5.4 million between 10 and 14 attend lower secondary school, and 3 million go to higher secondary schools. About 1.5 million and 0.5 million girls respectively go to higher secondary schools/colleges and universities.

The situation is especially alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles. In most of the northern tribal areas, education for girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. However, the overall status of women in Pakistan varies considerably across classes, regions and uneven socio-economic conditions. The division between rural and urban areas and educational opportunities also plays a major role in differentiating the standing of women. In addition, tribal, feudal and capitalist social formations create considerable impact on the status of women (Pal, 2000; *HRCF*, 1999). The 1973 constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, drawn up during the time of an elected democratic parliament, devoted a full chapter to fundamental rights. Its equality clause, Article 25, prohibiting discrimination of any kind against women, declares that: 'all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law and there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone'.

Although the constitution of Pakistan clearly endows women and men with equal human rights, the suspension and amendments to this constitution by a number of military dictators have changed the definition of nearly every clause related to human rights. Whatever the

status of women in Pakistan, it can be found through the written and visual material from 1947 to 1972 that it was not as deplorable as it is today. A system of co-education was common. Extremism had not taken root. The dress code was not as strict and women could wear Western styled outfits. They had representation in almost all the major segments of life, including politics (Hina, 2000; Farooqui, 2000; Khan, 2006). The drastic changes in Pakistani society relating to life-threatening gender discrimination entered with the extreme fanatical military dictatorship of General Zia, and his followers who introduced the ordinances that badly hit the country's liberal image and made women's lives miserable. These changes seem almost irreversible (Hyder, 2000; Khan, 2006; Warraich, 2008). The era from 1977 to the late 1980s (until the end of his military rule) remained virtually the most radical time for women in the sense that they could not react or raise their voices against the most vicious laws implemented against them in the name of Islam (Khan, 2006; Ashfaq, 2006; Malik, 2000).

In general, patriarchal values reinforce customs and practices rooted in the male-dominated social organisation of households (Ahmed *et al.*, 2004), which is fundamental to the social structure in Pakistani society. Rigid religio-social traditions that reduce women's status to that of a commodity are prevalent. For example, there is a prominent proverb, according to which three things are the reason for dispute, '*zan, zar and zameen*'.⁸² This adage not only makes a woman a motive for quarrels but also positions her as equivalent in value to land or money, and hence makes her appear as a product, an exchangeable thing or a bargain-able object.

Despite severe hardships, a considerable numbers of Pakistani women have made genuine progress in their professions. For example, Pakistan is the only Islamic state which has had a woman prime minister twice, and she was a Sindhi woman. During her second tenure as prime minister (1993-1996), Benazir Bhutto brought an amendment to the constitution's Article 17, through the legal framework order, which allocated special seats to women in the Senate, National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and FATA.⁸³ Her pro-socialist democratic party, PPP, appointed the first female speaker⁸⁴ in South Asia and a woman ambassador⁸⁵ to the USA. During her tenure, Pakistan saw its first female foreign minister,⁸⁶ secretary of

⁸² *Zan, zar and zameen* means, 'women, wealth and land'.

⁸³ Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

⁸⁴ Dr Fehmida Mirza.

⁸⁵ Dr Maliha Lodhi.

⁸⁶ Hina Rabbani Khar.

defence,⁸⁷ deputy speaker⁸⁸ of a province (Sindh) and media advisor,⁸⁹ and other women held prestigious positions within the administration, such as ministers, ambassadors and secretaries.

At present, many women are also working as judges, vice-chancellors of universities and bank managers. In addition, they are running publishing houses, television channels and their own businesses. A considerable number of women are engineers, doctors, journalists, professors, teachers, singers, actresses and fashion designers. Some of these women have earned international repute in the fields of human rights, literature, art and sports. In metropolitan areas, such as Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, women's advancement is visible. Job-oriented women enjoy driving, go shopping and to clubs, gyms and cinemas. Simultaneously, young girls study in co-educational establishments, attend dance classes, swim, learn music and fashion designing, and engage in other activities. A superficial overview of these cities may suggest that Pakistani women are enjoying a better life than that in most Islamic countries. However, a deep and thorough insight brings some rather disturbing scenarios into focus.

In Pakistan's rural areas, women frequently suffer from being the target of cultural, tribal and religious practices harmful to them. Domestic torture, rape, burning to death and throwing acid on women are some of the frequently reported cases. However, the reality is expressed by Shah (1998: 227): that 'most of the cases of domestic torture, murder, rape and abuse of women remain unregistered due to the multiple social and cultural standards'. In some tribal areas, not taking women to hospital is a question of honour, therefore many women die during childbirth. Subsequently, from birth to death, from childhood to the last minutes of their lives, they remain prey to the honour of their tribe and family. Sarfraz (1985: 31) presented a report of the *Pakistan Law Commission Report*⁹⁰ giving facts and figures related to women's lives in Pakistan. In her opinion: 'The average rural woman of Pakistan is born in near slavery, leads a life of drudgery and dies invariably in oblivion'. Over twenty years later, the Australian Red Cross report (2009: 5) explains: 'human rights groups say Pakistani women suffer severe

⁸⁷ Nargis Sethi.

⁸⁸ Shehla Raza.

⁸⁹ Sherry Rehman.

⁹⁰ 'In 1985, a commission of enquiry into women's problems in Pakistan was established by Begum Zari Sarfraz, a well-known female social worker and politician from Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa. The facts and figures highlighted in the report were very shocking. However, its publication was shelved by the Zia regime. After his demise in 1988, the report was made public during the Prime Minister ship of Benazir Bhutto. It was read, analysed and shelved again due to a change in government until a new Commission was formed in 1994 by the second Bhutto government' (Khan, 2006: 148).

discrimination, domestic violence, honour killings and are increasingly isolated by spreading Islamist fundamentalism’.

Women in Sindh, as in other provinces of Pakistan, are divided into rural and urban societies, with women who live in urban areas are far more privileged than women in rural areas. This is largely because urban society is multi-cultural and people with different ethnic backgrounds live there, with wider economic opportunities. City women are more educated and are less influenced by tribal culture than rural women. They have many more employment prospects, education and learning facilities. Rural women work in the fields in addition to performing household chores such as cooking, cleaning the house, washing dishes and clothes. They pick cotton, harvest wheat, paddy and other crops, collect grass for cattle and milk cows, buffalos and goats. Women are indeed engaged in all economic activities, but seldom receive their own money for their labour. They are often subjected to humiliation and violence but these atrocities go unheard. In the words of Hyder (2000: 37): ‘a woman in rural Sindh is indeed less well cared for than a buffalo, cow or goat’.⁹¹ Sultana (2000: 50) states that women of all ages are the targets of all imaginable mental, verbal and physical tortures.⁹² Rape, enforced silence, fear of husbands and other male relatives, death threats, selling to a number of men, lack of health facilities and giving birth to dozens of children and multiple other complex issues, ultimately lead many women to commit suicide. Violence against women is so common that *The Human Rights’ Commission of Pakistan* reports that in the year 2011, approximately one woman a day died in an honour killing in Sindh. This is the present scenario of Sindh, the second largest province of Pakistan.

Sindh, *The Moen-Jo-Daro* (Indus Valley Civilization, as it is known by the Western World), the southern province of Pakistan is considered to be one of the oldest civilizations in the world and the Sindhis lived under the influence of Sufism. But today’s Sindh is regrettably suffering from this menace of *karo-kari*.

⁹¹ My translation.

⁹² My translation.

Conclusion

Violence against women and gender discrimination in Pakistan has been increasing because the laws associated with honour have provided legal support for kinsmen to control women's actions and conduct through a wide range of violence. The study of the *Sharia* laws incorporated in Pakistani law, and the judicial decisions over the cases of honour killings, demonstrate that these laws do not consider killing for honour a murder. The lack of interest of the police and legal prosecutors and the social acceptance of violence against women has justified honour killing in the name of tradition and culture with the help of major segments of society. In this chapter, by discussing the introduction of *wali* and blood money into the laws, I have shown the ways in which the law widened the scope for gender discrimination in Pakistan, which further deepened women's inequality.

Although civil society, the media and numerous Pakistani political ruling parties have criticised the laws and worked to amend the ordinances in order to protect women, discriminatory laws are still integral parts of the Pakistani legal system. Because of the socio-cultural effects of Islamization, women face significant challenges. Women's status is considerably different because of the regional differences and the rural/urban division. Women who live in urban areas have opportunities to make their lives notably better. However, in rural Sindh, the feudal system and strict patriarchal norms leave the inadequately empowered women in a very vulnerable position where women play a reproductive role within the confines of the house. In order to provide better knowledge of the continuing violence against women in Sindh, the next chapter will discuss socio-economic conditions, the function of the illegal *jirga* system and the survival of women in the system.

Chapter Two: The Socio-economic and Political Conditions Underlying Honour Killing in Sindh

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the wider context of the social and political structure in which honour killings occur in Sindh. In order to elucidate the phenomenon of honour killing in Sindh and to provide a general perspective on Sindh, the current socio-economic and political conditions will be discussed and the diverse educational systems and their impact on the urban and rural populations will be explored. This chapter will also examine the motivations behind the growing number of honour killings in Sindh, the purpose of the *jirga* system and the situation in the state-run shelters available to female survivors of violence.

To examine the factors that contribute to honour killing, I shall describe the background of this tradition, tracing how and when *karo-kari* became a strong part of Sindhi custom. Details of the continuously increasing number of cases of honour killing in Sindh and the reported reasons for honour killing (Junejo, 1996; Iqbal, 2006; Shah, 1998) will also be discussed. To aid comprehension of why those who kill on the pretext of honour are rarely arrested but are compensated, this chapter will explore the ways in which the legal system works in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh.

The acceptance of the *jirga* system in rural society, its functions and how the unjust system deals with cases of *karo-kari* will be highlighted. I shall further discuss how and why, in northern Sindh, illegal courts have been more powerful than the legal courts of the state. This chapter will further investigate the situation of women who, after being accused as *kari*, try to find refuge; I shall explain the condition of state-run shelters. Throughout the chapter, I shall highlight the situation and conditions that enhance and reinforce the tradition of honour killing in Sindh.

A Perspective on Sindh

Before pondering why there have been so few references to honour killing in the early literature on Sindh and its culture, it will be useful to consider briefly the history of the area and the origins of the Sindh people. The word ‘Sindh’ is derived from ‘Sindhu’,⁹³ one of the longest rivers in the world. The culture of Sindh has its roots in the Indus Valley civilization.⁹⁴ Wright (2009) stated that the Indus Valley civilization was a cradle of early civilization, along with two other eastern civilizations, Mesopotamia and Pharonic Egypt. This civilization (3300–1300 BCE), extended from what is today north-eastern Afghanistan to Pakistan and north-western India (LeBlanc, 2013). The native people were called Dravidians. The distinguished historian Durant (1935) wrote that the Dravidians were civilized people when the Aryans, who probably came from the Caspian region, invaded them between 2000 and 3000 BCE. Panhwar (1983: 85) explained that after the Aryans, Sindh was conquered by the Persian Empire in the sixth century BCE followed by the Greeks under Alexander (326 BCE) for a short period. After that, Sindh became part of the *Mauria* dynasty of India in 305 BCE. During this reign, Buddhism flourished in Sindh, especially in the days of Ashoka the Great.⁹⁵ Writing about the downfall of the Indus Valley civilization, Lambrick (1986) in his book *History of Sindh* affirmed that in ancient times, the abundance of river water and vast plains gave birth to rich agriculture, which attracted foreign invaders and migrants from both distant and neighbouring states.

After the *Mauria* dynasty, three central Asian semi-nomadic races, the Indo-Scythians, the Kushans and the Huns, ruled Sindh, followed by the Sassanids⁹⁶ and Rajputs of India (Dowson, 1867; Panhwar, 1983). Sindh was an independent, sovereign state during the period of Raja Dahir of the Brahman dynasty in 700 CE and was attacked in 711 by Arabs (Briggs, 1829; Fredunbeg, 1900; Friedmann, 1984). Then, the Habbari dynasty from 841 to 1024, the Soomra from 1024 to 1351 and the Samma from 1335 to 1520 ruled Sindh. Sindh saw difficult times during the dynasties of Arghun, 1520 to 1554, and Tarkhan, 1554 to 1591, who both ruled tyrannically. The Mughal Emperor Akbar annexed Sindh to Delhi in 1591 after defeating

⁹³ The Indus River, also called the Sindhu or Abasin and locally known as the Mehran, is a major south-flowing river in South Asia. The total length of the river is 3,180 km (1,980 miles), which makes it one of longest rivers in Asia.

⁹⁴ *Mohenjo-Daro*, also known as the Harappan Civilization.

⁹⁵ My translation.

⁹⁶ Persians.

the last Tarkhan ruler. The Mughals ruled Sindh from 1701 to 1783 through Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhor, who was made governor of Sindh by the Mughals (Friedmann, 1984). The Talpurs, who ruled Sindh from 1783 to 1843, succeeded Kalhor. Their rule ended when the British invaded Sindh in 1843 and made it part of the Bombay Residency (Hasan, 1959; Jackson, 1999). However, on 1 April 1936, Sindh was separated from the Bombay Residency and became a province of British India. The continuous attacks and invasions had reduced Sindh's boundaries. However, when Pakistan came into being in 1947, Sindh joined the new country as an independent division and became one of its provinces (Panhwar, 1983; Sheedai, 1993).

A few historians have written the history of Sindh from the social perspective, and in these some findings are common: Sindhi people by nature are very submissive, known for their religious forbearance, show respect for humanity and nature and have an inclination towards sufism.⁹⁷ Throughout these chronological surveys, no particular reference to violence against women can be found, but only a deep respect. In some areas of Sindh, Sindhis still call their daughters *amman*⁹⁸ to show their respect for them. Moreover, the Qur'an, being holy, is respected more than anything else in the Muslim world but it is in Sindh where commonly a girl is considered as *sat Qur'an*.⁹⁹

Today, Sindh is the third largest and the second most populous province of Pakistan (Nasrullah *et al.*, 2009). It is bordered by Baluchistan province to the west, Punjab province to the north, the Indian states of Gujarat and Rajasthan to the east and the Arabian Sea to the south. The provincial capital and largest city of the province is Karachi, which is Pakistan's largest city and the country's only financial hub (Ram, 1984). As confirmed by the Rural/Urban Statistics Division of the Government of Sindh (2009), until 1951 the population was only six million. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2015), the 1998 census of Pakistan indicated a population of 30.4 million. In terms of percentage, the population of Sindh increased by 81.5% (from 30,439,893 to 55,245,497). The population increased enormously after 1951 due to migration from India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and other provinces of Pakistan (Sheedai 1993). Because of the high influx of refugees, illegal

⁹⁷ The mystical system of the sufis.

⁹⁸ *Amman* means mother in most Pakistani languages.

⁹⁹ *Sat-Qur'an* is a Sindhi term, attributed to a virgin girl with respect. The literal meaning is 'equal to seven Qur'an'.

immigrants and urbanization, the proportion of the population living in cities has risen to 45% and only 55% of the population now lives in rural Sindh. Sindh is currently divided into 28 districts and its total area is 140,914 square km (Lari, 1994) with a population of 43 million, or 26% of the total population of Pakistan (Bhatti *et al.*, 2012).

Sindh has predominantly remained an agrarian and rural society. It is the richest province of Pakistan in the natural resources of gas, petroleum and coal. Cotton, rice, wheat, sugar cane, bananas and mangoes are the most important crops. It has a seaport, large industrial zones and trade centres. Bengali and Sadaqat (2005) explain that the economy of Sindh is the second largest of all the provinces of Pakistan. Sindh has a comparatively high GDP per capita, at US\$1,400 in 2010, which is three times that of the rest of the nation. The Finance Department of the Government of Sindh (2010-2011) confirms that Sindh's contribution to Pakistan's GDP has been between 30% and 32.7%. Its share of the service sector, however, has ranged from 21% to 27.8% and that of the agricultural sector has varied from 21.4% to 27.7%. A World Bank report (2008) reveals that, since 1972, Sindh's GDP has expanded by 3.6 times.

Administratively, Sindh is divided into districts but unofficially it has two main divisions, urban¹⁰⁰ and rural. The major economic activities are beneficial for the urban areas. The people who live in urban areas are mostly non-Sindhis¹⁰¹ but are more privileged with booming businesses, job opportunities and better education, whereas rural areas lack even basic necessities (Siddiqi, 2012; Dani & Zaman, 1975). Despite the fact that the largest proportion of Pakistan's taxes are collected from Sindh, most of the native inhabitants live in rural areas and survive on agriculture, which provides them with a limited livelihood. In rural Sindh, most of the population lives in mud houses and straw shacks with no gas or electricity. Because of the inadequacy of health facilities, lack of education and poor quality of food, the majority of rural people live below the poverty line (Khokhar, 2002; Rathore, 2012; Wistro, 2000). Until 2008, the country had one of the lowest allocations of funds to social welfare and security in the region (Gazdar, 2011). In general, rural Sindh is badly affected by a shortage of irrigation water, an increasing population and joblessness. According to the Poverty Reduction

¹⁰⁰ Urban dwellers mainly live in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah and Larkana.

¹⁰¹ Mainly those who migrated from India and chose to live in Pakistan after the partition of 1947 and still call themselves *Muhajirs* (immigrants). However, in the big and prosperous cities of Sindh, along with the *Muhajirs*, other ethnic groups such as Pushto, Balochi and Punjabi also dominate. In addition, language is the biggest barrier between the urban and rural population. Natives speak Sindhi, while *Muhajirs* and other urbanized people speak Urdu, which was made an official language of Pakistan upon its independence from India.

Strategy (PRS) Monitoring Project (1973-2000) report (2008) and the Pakistan Economic Survey (2010-11), about 35% of the people in Sindh earn less than US\$1.00 per day. The floods of 2010 cut off eight districts of upper Sindh. In 2011, heavy rains washed away many villages of six districts of lower Sindh. These two years enormously increased the miseries of the Sindhi people and further lowered their standard of living.

As in other provinces of Pakistan, in Sindh, three education systems run simultaneously. First, government schools and colleges, which follow a government-prescribed curriculum and provide free education, are modeled on the British education system. Second is the private educational system¹⁰², which is purely commercially based; the third comprises *deeni madrassahs*, which provide a parallel system of education predominantly for the poorer segment of the population, in villages and the outskirts of cities. The *madrassahs* are normally adjacent to mosques¹⁰³ where *molvis*¹⁰⁴ give religious education to children.

Sindh has 49,605 educational institutions ranging from primary to higher secondary level (Ali, 2011). The proportions of the 4.5 million school-going children reduce dramatically as they grow older: 90.8% of pupils attend primary schools, 5.4% attend middle schools, 3.3% attend secondary schools and 0.5% attend higher secondary schools: according to the Government of Sindh's literacy censuses, the education rate in Sindh was 60.77% in 1972, 37.5% in 1981, 45.29% in 1998, 60.7% in 2008 and 69.50% in 2012 (Reform Support Unit, 2014). Although the census results show a rise in education rate as well as in the numbers of literate people, people who can only write their names are also included. However, rural growth in literacy is much slower than urban growth (Ali, 2011). 'There are approximately 7,500 boys and girls schools closed in the province' (IJOASS,¹⁰⁵ 2013).

Pakistan has been under the control of military dictatorships for more than half of its existence. These military dictators, in order to prolong their rule, deliberately ignore the education sector in interior Sindh with the support of local *waderas* and *sardars*. Pakistan has one of the lowest rates of literacy in the world and the lowest among countries of comparative

¹⁰² Mainly English-medium schools.

¹⁰³ A place of worship for Muslims.

¹⁰⁴ An Islamic religious preacher is called a *Molvi* in most of the sub-continent's languages.

¹⁰⁵ *International Journal of Asian Social Science*.

resources and socio-economic situations (*WDOE*,¹⁰⁶ 2010-2011). Indeed, education and health are the two sectors that face the worst in Pakistan's budget every year:

Spending on education is expected to decline to 1.3 per cent of GDP in 2010-11 from an earlier 2 per cent of GDP in 2009-10, a steep decline in spending on education and health in the aftermath of the inflated GDP size touching RS18, 000 billion or \$210 billion for the outgoing financial year. (*Urdu News on line*, Pakistan Budget, 2011-2012)

Successive democratic governments have remained unsuccessful at keeping the education system on the right track in Pakistan, especially in Sindh (Rathore, 2012; Khokhar, 2002), mainly because most of the tribal leaders are also the functionaries of the local and central political administration (Bhutto, 2005). To secure their positions and maintain their standards, local tribal *waderas*, with the help of the government machinery, successively disregard education (*IJOASS*, 2013; Rathore, 2013). Mass education will lead to economic independence for the poor and they will become more eligible for jobs and *waderas* do not want this to happen. They want to keep the peasants economically under their thumb (*Dawn*, 2004).

The buildings of government schools are empty and are used as barns and stables for animals (Shamsie, 2012). Teachers are hired but most of them do not teach because of the lack of any check and balance system from the higher authorities (Maqbool, 2014). The absence of a functional government educational sector and the presence of an expensive private school system provided an opportunity for extremist factions, who have been against any kind of education except for Islamic, to open the *madrassahs* in rural Sindh (Yousuf & Hasan, 2015). Ali (2011) states that, in Sindh alone, 1,885 *madrassahs* are operating, with 11,026 teachers and 326,244 enrolled students. Rathore (2012), however, claims that each year there are hundreds of newly constructed *madrassahs* in Sindh. Due to poverty and the non-availability of the government educational system, the rural population sends their children to these *madrassahs*. The *madrassahs* not only provide food for the children but also two sets of clothing a year (Rathore, 2012). Thus, the wave of extremism has successfully created hatred of modern civilization and education, which results in sectarianism. The most obvious result of this broken system is the increasing proportion of uneducated people, especially women. Hill (2013) argues that the stance of religious bodies has been mainly antagonistic towards

¹⁰⁶ World Data on Education.

women. However, the indoctrination process is not confined to the *madrassah* system alone. The local *waderas* have strong justifications for their stance against women's education, which they claim is un-Islamic and a threat to their ancient civilization (Khan, 2011). Thus, most men in this society are firm believers in this doctrine.

The status of women's education in Sindh is deplorable. For the feudal landlords, there are few – if any – benefits that could arise from having educated serfs. The landlords know that education of the 'serfs' can only lead to the downfall of their perverse social system, as educated men and women will not tolerate being treated like slaves. For this reason, the landlord class has opposed universal primary education from the very beginning of Sindh's history, and to this day, their efforts have succeeded. Rural Sindh, which is the heart of the feudal system, has an almost non-existent education system, especially for girls. The female literacy rate in Sindhi villages was only 13% in the 1997 census. (Khan, *On-line magazine*, March 2011)

Keeping women ignorant and uneducated is a process of systematic gender subordination (Azam, 1993). It helps men to control their lives and deprive them of their basic rights in the name of cultural traditions. Several inhumane customary practices, including bartering girls to settle disputes, marriage to the Qur'an and the murder of women in the name of honour, are the results of this subjugation. In every sector of life in northern Sindh, tribal and feudal values are dominant and culture and crime become inseparable. The marriage system in Sindh is also unique, and this will be discussed next.

The Marriage System in Sindh

The different communities living in Sindh observe different norms and practices of marriage on the basis of their social and geographical backgrounds. However, the common family marriage system is explained by Hanmer (1996: 14): 'the tradition is cross-cousin marriage and especially favoured is marriage between father's brothers' sons and daughters. More than one daughter may be married into the same family and both sons and daughters may be exchanged between two families'. Consanguineous or close-kin marriages are the preferred choice of the people living in many parts of Asia (Bittles *et al.*, 1993; Bittles, 1994) and this is also the case in Sindh. According to Jones (2010), consanguineous marriages are common in societies that do not allow interaction between men and women outside the kin group: therefore, consanguineous marriages are predominant in Islamic societies. In Pakistan, the aim of consanguinity is to strengthen the solidarity of a kin group or family in the belief that, if

outsiders enter the group, they will weaken it (Lieven, 2011; Agha, 2016). Close-kin marriages facilitate and strengthen the maintenance of the patriarchal society and give the men of the family authority to control a woman's life from birth to grave. Her father controls her before marriage with the help of his sons, he then gives her to his brother's son in marriage and thus the power of control shifts to his brother's family (Hussain, 1999; Zaman, 2008). Thus, the woman's husband and his brothers control her and the authority of men over women remains intact within a family. Marriages in Pakistan are a matter of the two families' choice. Families have to decide who to marry to whom.

The total relationship of exchange, which constitutes marriage, is not established between a man and a woman but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange not as one of the partners. This remains true even when the girl's feelings are taken into consideration, as moreover, is usually the case in acquiescing to the proposed union, she precipitates or allows the exchange to take place; she cannot alter its nature. (Claude, 1969: 115)

In urban areas, where the population is mostly non-Sindhi, the marriage system is somewhat different from that rural society. Nowadays, in advanced cities such as Karachi, there are marriage bureaus to help to develop contacts among families for finding marriage partners for young people. The modern trend among the elite class is that educated urban young women and men prefer a match settled abroad, preferably in an English-speaking country. Many urbanized educated families' young people have gained the right to choose their life partners, generally with their parents' consent. Being wealthy, these families are capable of giving a substantial dowry to their girls and also to set *haq mehr*¹⁰⁷ (established under the *Sharia*) for the protection of their daughters. 'And give the women (on marriage) their dower (*mehr*) as a free gift; but if they of their own good pleasure remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it with right good cheer.'¹⁰⁸ In some cases, especially in cities, the family of a bride demands hundreds of thousands of rupees but in rural culture dowries are relatively modest in value.

¹⁰⁷ The *haq mehr* is a contractual amount in shape of currency or goods, given to a bride by the bridegroom at the time of marriage. It is an obligatory condition and cannot be dispensed with. The amount is not specified. It can be in billions or in two pairs of shoes or an animal or a home. It is either given at the time of marriage or after the marriage has been mutually agreed. Once agreed, it has to be paid, and once paid, it cannot be taken back. However, a wife can waive all or part of the *mehr* or can return it after taking it. In *Sharia* law, the husband can divorce his wife at any time, so the object of dower is to serve as a check upon the exercise by the husband of his power to terminate the marriage at will (Billah & Hai, 1987: 420-423). However, the value of the traditional amount of RS32 which is still used as *mehr* in Pakistan is equivalent to 20 pence in Britain today (8 May, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ The Holy Qur'an: Chapter 4, *Surah Nisaa*, verse 4.

Families set a symbolic *haq mehr* of RS¹⁰⁹32 in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

However, problems regarding marriage are still prevalent in less privileged urban areas with a somewhat different nature. For instance, women's education plays an important role in delaying their marriage in South Asia (Cleland & Jejeebhoy, 1996). Similarly, in Sindh, it is difficult to arrange marriages for educated and job-oriented girls due to their age and independent attitude. It is a common perception that after the age of 24 girls are over-age and marrying becomes a problem. Finding proportionally educated boys for educated girls becomes a big problem for the parents and for girls as well, even if they have their parents' consent to find a suitable match.

In addition, due to the strong dowry system, some girls remain unmarried for life. Poor families cannot afford to give a large dowry with their daughter to fulfil the demands of the groom's parents. Marriage in Islamic societies involves a dower or dowry, called *jahez*,¹¹⁰ which is given by the bride's natal family at the time of the marriage. Goody and Tambiah (1973: 62) state that *jahez* is property given to the daughter to take with her into marriage and that technically it is her property and in her own control, although the husband usually has rights of management. A husband cannot transfer the dowry to his sister, partly because he requires his wife's consent. Nonetheless, the present use of *jahez* in Pakistan is similar to Veen's (1972, cited in Sharma: 1984) description: 'Dowry property is not women's wealth, but wealth that goes with women. Women are the vehicles by which it is transmitted rather than its owners'. Substantial transfers, called *bari*,¹¹¹ are made from the bride's family to the bride and her in-laws (a little before the marriage day). This type of gift is normally in the form of cash, jewelry or clothes so it remains at her disposal.

Nevertheless, the institution of marriage in interior Sindh is varied. Certainly the family structure in the agrarian regions of Pakistan is strong enough to control the marriage decisions of offspring (Zaman, 2008), but there are a number of other factors involved in taking a marriage decision. For example, along with consanguineous or close-kin marriages arranged

¹⁰⁹ RS is an abbreviation for Rupees (Pakistani currency).

¹¹⁰ *Jahez* is a form of dowry in different forms such as money, jewellery and useful items it is given to a bride by her parents.

¹¹¹ *Bari* (dowry/gifts) in a form of jewellery and other valueable items.

by men, endogamy is also a preferred method because it comforts them that their daughters are not given to outsiders and that no outcast has entered their circle to pollute the system, so they marry within an ethnic or social group or caste, rejecting others as being unsuitable for marriage or for other close personal relationships (Miller, 2012). Endogamy is not only practiced by the upper class or higher middle class but also by the under-privileged. Every tribe, *brotherly*,¹¹² clan or caste, irrespective of class, wants to remain intact through various forms of endogamy (Hussain, 1999). The system is even stricter in the elite class where status endogamy is a very strong norm. Doud (2000: 22) explains that in:

Upper-class Sindhi families, where the caste system is still an unchallenged norm, many girls remain unmarried because it seems a matter of insult to marry off a girl to other tribes or castes. In addition, if there are more girls than boys in one family, then it is likely that some girls will not be married as marriages take place on an exchange basis.¹¹³

In my own family there have been two similar cases; the sister of my *dadi*¹¹⁴ and my *phupho*¹¹⁵ were not given in marriage because there were no boys available in the family and marrying them outside was considered an insult. Khan (2011) illustrates another side of the marriage structure in rural Sindh:

It is also a common practice in Sindh to marry one's daughter to inanimate and holy objects, like the Qur'an, or even a tree, for example. The marriage with the Qur'an is called *haque-bukhsh*.¹¹⁶ This hard tradition usually occurs in the families of the agrarian landed aristocracy of Sindh. The main purpose behind this inhuman act is to avoid the transfer of land property out of family hands at the time of marriage of their daughter or sister. (Khan, *on line magazine*, March 2011)

Khan (2011) names one ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan and a previous leader of the opposition in Sindh who had forced their sisters to follow this tradition so that they could retain their agricultural land. As a result of such marriages: 'at a very young age, the girls are given a copy of the Qur'an, a maid and a room to perform religious rituals for the rest of their lives'¹¹⁷ (Shoro, 1997). They normally wear white clothes and are expected to remain isolated. Noor

¹¹² Group of people belonging to the same caste or clan (shared community).

¹¹³ My translation.

¹¹⁴ Paternal grandmother.

¹¹⁵ Paternal aunt, the sister of my father.

¹¹⁶ *Haque-bukhsh* means waiving the right to marry.

¹¹⁷ My translation.

(2000: 67) argues that: ‘Women’s marriages with the Qur’an are absolutely un-Islamic and are created by the tribal system’.¹¹⁸ Whether or not such marriages are supported by religion or the state, they are still taking place in Sindh (mostly in Sindhi feudal families), where 91% of the population is Muslim.

The marriage system among the poor rural class of northern Sindh is more diverse. In the context of northern Sindh, Khan (2006: 177) names such local marital traditions and customs as *valvar*,¹¹⁹ *vikro*,¹²⁰ *watto-satto*,¹²¹ *addo-baddo*,¹²² *wani*¹²³ and *faislo*,¹²⁴ which are used when deciding the marriage or the fate of girls. In general, the marriage of a daughter is not a big concern but as soon as a boy of a family reaches the age of puberty, parents become concerned about his marriage, and if a girl is not available in the family for any reason, they buy a girl. In order to buy a girl for their son, sometimes parents sell their cattle and other valuable belongings. Sultana (2000: 49) states that, in Sindh, girls are sold like cattle.¹²⁵ However bride-wealth has a completely different purpose from *jahez* and *bari*. Bride-wealth is money or valuable items such as animals or property taken by a bride’s father, brother, uncle or any other senior-most kin from the bridegroom or his relatives as a price for the bride. The price may vary in accordance with the financial position of both parties. Goody and Tambiah (1973: 64) explain that in poor circumstances, ‘men of wealth’ ‘acquire’ women of low status in marriage.

‘Many tribes living in Sindh sell their daughters as young as seven or eight for money or for another girl. In these types of marriage, exchanged girls are indeed used to provide girls for their brothers, cousins and maybe uncles or other male relatives, in the name of marriage’ (Noor, 2000: 67).¹²⁶ Worldwide, child marriage is more frequent among uneducated than educated women (Phillip, 2014). Similarly, it is more common in rural than in urban Sindh and it affects poor women the most. The legal age for marriage in Pakistan is eighteen for males and sixteen for females, with penal sanctions for contracting under-age marriage

¹¹⁸ My translation.

¹¹⁹ *Valvar* (exchange a girl for a set amount).

¹²⁰ *Vikro* (sell).

¹²¹ *Watto-satto* (exchange a girl for a girl or girls. The literal meaning of the phrase is ‘give and take’).

¹²² *Addo-baddo* (exchange a girl for a girl).

¹²³ *Wani* (a girl or girls given for peace).

¹²⁴ *Faislo* (a decision taken in a *jirga*).

¹²⁵ My translation.

¹²⁶ My translation.

(PDHS,¹²⁷ 2012-2013). The laws that have direct implications for child marriages are the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929; the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 and the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961. However, the Provincial Assembly of Sindh passed Pakistan's first law prohibiting child marriages (Ghori, 29 April 2014). According to the bill, Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age, contracts a child marriage shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment which may extend to three years and shall be liable to fine. In the law, the defining age of a child for both males and females is 18. Inayat (16 May 2014) reports that in March 2014, a bill of similar nature was presented in the National Assembly of Pakistan with a purpose to amend the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 to make child marriage an offense and to provide harder punishments for contracting child marriages. This national-level bill currently faces strong resistance against the bill from Muslim Clerics and CII.¹²⁸

Nonetheless, violations of the law are common: 'Generally speaking the laws on minimum marriage age are poorly enforced. 13% of girls are married by the time they are 15 and 40% by age 18 with laws on minimum marriage age poorly enforced' (Mumtaz *et al.*, 2009: 1). Sultana (2000: 49) states that as a consequence, mismatched marriages, such as a twelve- or thirteen-year-old girl being married to a 60-year-old man, cause great troubles for the girl. Because it is regarded as a taboo for girls to discuss sex-related abuse, in these situations, some girls commit suicide, become mentally ill or run away. Those who remain alive or are brought back home are either killed as *karis* or sold. If they are sold, throughout their lives they face inhuman treatment.¹²⁹

In marriage, as in almost every aspect of life, women are subject to violence. Today, northern Sindh is a centre of gender-based violence on the pretext of immoral behaviour, which is viewed as a way of restoring the reputation and honour of the family (Goldstein, 2002). Such violence claims many lives every year. According to Warraich (2005: 99): 'from 1998 to 2003, in Sindh 980 cases of honour killing were registered, 231 cases were compromised and the rest of them were pending. The statistics show that due to no conviction, none of the killers of 980 persons was sent to the gallows'. With the growing number of cases of this type, the

¹²⁷ *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey*.

¹²⁸ The Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional advisory body on *Shari'a* issues.

¹²⁹ My translation.

situation merits a careful examination of the tradition of honour killing in Sindh.

Honour Killing in Sindh

As far as the socio-historic background of Sindh is concerned, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (1698–1752) is considered the greatest source of Sindh’s individual and collective wisdom and the most authentic social and cultural record of Sindh (Laghari, 2010). The most loved and undisputedly admired Sindhi mystic poet, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai depicted nearly every conceivable object and attitude of Sindh in his poetry. His poetry revolves around the struggle and deep love of seven female characters who overcame all obstacles to reach and find their love and, most amazingly, their physical desires were not denied, as testified by the German scholar Schimmel (2003).¹³⁰ Unlike other sufi poets, Shah depicted his heroic female characters’ beloved as humans. It is likely that he would have referred to it in his poetry, or at least commented on the effect that it had on the women about whom he wrote. Hence, Lashari (1992: 32) deemed “*karo-kari* an immoral perception of honour”¹³¹ and showed his surprise, asking: “how has this norm taken place on the soil of love, brotherhood and tolerance?”¹³² Without any reference to the practice in the works of even the most sensitive and sympathetic writer on women’s lives in Sindh in the early eighteenth century, no-one could possibly say when the first case of honour killing occurred in Sindh.

The very first documentary evidence that shows the presence of killing to preserve honour in Sindh is found in the book *History of General Sir Charles Napier’s administration of Scinde*, written by William Napier in 1851,¹³³ after the British had annexed Sindh and ended the rule of the Talpurs (the Baloch).¹³⁴ William Napier, the brother of Charles Napier, wrote:

¹³⁰ ‘The most outstanding master of popular Sufi poetry in Pakistan is, no doubt, Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit. He was born into a family of mystics in 1689. Shah Latif translated into poetry the cries of *Sohni* whose beloved *Mehanwal* grazes cattle on an island in the Indus. *Sohni* slips away from her husband every night to swim across the river to meet her beloved (Schimmel, 2003: 391).

¹³¹ My translation.

¹³² My translation.

¹³³ The detail of this book is given

¹³⁴ The Baloch are a warlike race; they originally came from Central Asian, Persian and Turkish peoples, who are considered staunch Muslims. They entered the subcontinent as invaders. The raiders either returned home or established their government in some parts of the sub-continent, including Sindh. A part of their army stayed, mainly in Balochistan, and with the passage of time learned the local language and mixed with the local community.

With regard to murder, it is still a sort of rude natural law, understood and rigidly maintained. If a man of tribe 'A' seduces a woman of tribe 'B', her friends (relatives) kill both, a blood feud arises, and the two tribes become deadly enemies unless they have joined to slay both culprits. But if a man of 'A' seduces a woman of 'B', and her relatives kill her, while the man escapes, there will be a blood feud. When reconciliation takes place it is not unusual for the murderer to give a sister or daughter in marriage to the next of kin of the slain, and I have known the daughter of the murdered man given to the murderer. (Napier, 1851: 303)

The point to be noted here is that the British annexed Sindh in 1843 from the Balochis, who had ruled Sindh from 1783 to 1843. Most scholars agree that the tradition of honour killing entered Sindh when the Balochis migrated there and ruled Sindh for more than six decades, 1783 to 1843 (Kakepoto, 2005; Wistro, 2000).

Although the document written by Napier (1851) suggests the existence of killings to protect the honour of a tribe or family back in the middle of the nineteenth century, the strict implementation of the law sought to prevent violence against women and to curb such killings, and this kind of killing consequently became extinct¹³⁵ (Hina, 2000; Hoodbai, 2000) to the extent that Khan (2006) has argued that even before the 1990s, the term 'honour killing' was not known to people. This might be surprising as Pakistan came into being in 1947 but people were not familiar with the term 'honour killing'. The main reason for that was that when Pakistan came into existence, it inherited a common law and criminal justice system modelled on the British legal system, which was secular in nature (Irfan, 2008; Saigol, 2009) and there was no provision for killing on the pretext of honour: murder under any circumstances was dealt with as a murder. It was 1990 when, in a bid to bring Pakistani law into accordance with *Sharia* law, *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* (1990) were incorporated into the Pakistani Penal Code. That had two far-reaching impacts. First, if the legal heir of the deceased does not want to exercise his right, the death penalty cannot be awarded, and second, if the legal heirs of the deceased compromise with the killer, they can withdraw their right of *qisas* and therefore there is no death penalty. This means that an adult sane *wali*, at any time and without any compensation or with compensation, can waive his right of *qisas*. Hence, the killing became a compoundable offence in which the parties to a dispute can reach a compromise and proven killers can seek or buy pardon from the victim's family. In addition to this, in section 300 of the PPC, there is an exemption of "grave and sudden provocation", defined as unintentional

¹³⁵ My translation.

murder: “A male relative can also kill a woman on the pretext of ‘sudden provocation’ or ‘fit of anger’ or ‘heat of passion’” (Khan, 2006: 175). Because of this plea, honour killing is not considered murder, which facilitates offenders by awarding them mitigated and mild punishments such as imprisonment for only a few years. Thus, the practice of killings under the pretext of honour, which was curbed during the British rule in Sindh from 1843 to 1947, was unleashed by the above-mentioned amendments to the Pakistani Penal Code. Hence, the areas where the majority of Baloch tribes resided became the centre of the honour killing.

The enmity among the Baloch tribes, who live in Balochistan, is centuries old (Hina, 2000; Junejo, 1996; Khan, 2006). Still today, among some of the Balochi tribes that are engaged in a warlike situation with opposing tribes are Khosa, Jagirani, Shar, Pitafi, Bozdar, Jakhrani, Jatoi and Mastoi (Khan, 2006; Shaikh, 2000; Kundhar, 2000). Doud Pota (2000: 73) argued that the tribal enmity among Baloch tribes continues from generation to generation. If tribe ‘A’ kills two members of tribe ‘B’, it becomes obligatory for tribe ‘B’ to kill four people (double) of tribe ‘A’ in revenge.¹³⁶ Likewise, these areas with frequent tribal clashes are the centre of honour killing. In this regard, Hoodbai (2000: 24) stated that in Northern Sindh’s districts of Jacobabad, Kashmore, Larkana, Qambar, Dadu, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Sukkur, Khairpur and Naushehro Feroze, which are adjacent to the border with Balochistan, because of the Balochi influence, *karo-kari* has become a strong cultural norm in these districts.¹³⁷

Since there is no evidence to suggest the existence of honour killing in Sindh before the Balochi ruled Sindh and the British law to eradicate killing in the name of honour was made soon after the end of Baloch rule, some researchers suggest that the tradition belonged to the Balochis and entered Sindh when Balochis ruled and migrated there (Kakepoto, 2005; Wistro, 2000). Khan (2006) states:

In Sindh, almost all the journalists and community people I interviewed were of the opinion that honour killings were not originally a Sindhi custom. They believe that it came to Sindh with the migration of Balochi tribes, which were of central Asian, Persian and Turkish origin. They justified their argument by identifying the areas in Sindh where tribes of Balochi origin had settled and still had close communication links with Balochistan and correlating higher statistics of honour killing from such areas. (Khan, 2006: 149)

¹³⁶ My translation.

¹³⁷ My translation.

Thus, it was only when honour killing became a pardonable offence through the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinance* of 1990 that hundreds of killings committed under the pretext of honour took place and honour killings as a violation of human rights became one of the most discussed issues in the world at large. From the beginning of the 1990s onwards, some NGOs such as *HRCP* started compiling and publishing data about violence against women and honour killing in their monthly Urdu newsletter *Jehd-e-Haq*. The greatest number of such killings was found in rural and semi-rural areas of upper Sindh, where agricultural and tribal patterns are strong. The *HRCP* report (2000: 71) states: ‘*Karo-kari* in Sindh shows a continuously rising trend over the years – 432 in 1993, 776 in 1994, 864 in 1995, 864 in 1996, 750 in 1997, 800 in 1998 and 886 in 1999’. The *HRCP* confirms that in Sindh in the first 110 days of 1998, 148 cases of honour killing were reported, and comments: ‘Overall a 15 per cent rise in honour killing was noted, compared with the previous year’s reported incidents’.

In January 2000, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report claimed that in 1999, 364 women died in honour killings in Sindh alone. The exact figures for honour killings are hard to compile because: ‘Up to 70% of honour related crimes go unreported’ as stated by *INRFVVP*¹³⁸ in its report *Honour Crime and Killings increased in 2004*. According to the human rights organizations *HRCP* (2004) and *IRIN* (2012), in Sindh at least 453 women were killed in 2001, 423 women in 2002 and 638 women in 2003 on the pretext of honour. In 2005, it was stated that the average annual number of honour killings for the whole nation was more than 10,000 (Warraich, 2005). According to a report released by *RADFHR*¹³⁹ (2013) during 2012, in Sindh alone, as many as 714 people, including 571 women and 143 men, were killed on the pretext of honour (*Daily Times*, 8 March 2013), a higher figure than in 2011, when 605 women and 115 men were murdered in the name of honour in Sindh (*IJOASS*, 2013). *The Express Tribune* (10 March 2013) reports that: ‘During the year 2012 as many as 714 people including 571 women and 143 men were killed for saving honour across the province of Sindh’.

In Sindh, the factors contributing to honour killing have been listed: as choice of marriage; refusal of an arranged marriage; choosing a marriage partner against the wishes of the family; seeking divorce from husband; being a victim of sexual assault or rape; committing adultery

¹³⁸ *The International Network for the Rights of Female Victims of Violence in Pakistan*.

¹³⁹ *Research and Development for Human Resources*.

and having illicit relations (Iqbal, 2006; Junejo, 1996; Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2012). However, there are numerous other reasons for honour killing, such as: getting rid of a wife or any other woman of the family; desiring a second marriage (Actionaid, 2012; Aftab *et al.*, 2008); property saving; or if a wife gives birth to a female child, brings a small dowry or maybe presents an unsweetened cup of tea to her husband. A woman can be killed under the plea of honour if she serves food late, goes to her parents' home without seeking the permission of her husband, or interrupts or refuses any small thing to her husband. Who can stop men from killing a woman? (Thebo, 2000; Khokhar, 2002).¹⁴⁰ In addition, there is another common trend, identified by Noor (2000: 68) that after the first night of marriage the next morning could be a decisive time for the future of the bride. If the newly wed groom confirms her virginity, she will survive, but if he does not for one reason or another, she can be murdered as *kari*. In this kind of murder, the bride's brothers and father sometimes also take part.¹⁴¹ Shah (1998) also argues that: 'The triggering point of a man's passionate urge to kill would just be a comment he would hear in the marketplace. This is called a *tano*¹⁴² that renders him 'socially impotent'. Shah considers *tano* the reason for more than 70% of the killings in northern Sindh. The *tano* could be very subtle but for any man it would be enough to kill a woman, and in some cases also the man whom he believes could be involved with the woman. For instance, if a man taunts another man, perhaps saying something like 'you seem so respectable here but check the character of your wife or sisters. First kill them and then talk to us', these comments bring the penalty of death to the women, who may be working hard in the fields or their houses. In these cases, men do not waste time enquiring about the truth or the validity of the remarks. As a result:

Women are caught most of the time unaware, as they are going about their daily routines. Hence Khursheed, a Langah woman from Khairpur, was killed during her sleep, so were Farida and her young daughter Maujan; Hasina's sister was killed when her hands were holding a load of fodder; Janat's aunt was killed when she was kneading dough, eighteen-year-old Waziran was watching a play on television. Thirteen-year-old Sarah was asked to make tea for her brother who drank it, took a gun, killed the two boys outside and came back to kill his sister while she was chaffing wheat. (Shah, *Dawn*, 19-25 November 1998)

Those women who realize that they will be killed and try to run away enter another grim

¹⁴⁰ My translation.

¹⁴¹ My translation.

¹⁴² A Sindhi word for insinuation and insult mixed together.

situation. Hina (2000) states that many women in rural Sindh have never been out of their houses. Male relatives do not want their family's women to be seen outside. So when the women who are threatened with death run away due to their fear of being killed, they enter into another vicious circle as they do not know anything about the outside world or the transport system.¹⁴³ Without any money, they cannot travel. Sometimes they are kidnapped, raped, killed or re-captured by their relatives and meet a very painful destiny¹⁴⁴ (Kundhar, 2000). If an injured woman reaches the police, they discourage her and do not register her complaint against her male family members but rather recommend her to be reconciled with them (Fatima, 2000; Khan, 2006). There have been a number of reports published in newspapers that the police officers keep such women in their custody at the police stations and, after taking a bribe, hand them over to their family members, who waste no time in killing them (Faqr, 2001; Hina, 2000). The police facilitate the families because, being a part of the culture, they have sympathy with the family of the woman who is threatened with death, rather than with the woman (Khan, 2006).

The concept of honour in interior Sindh is very flexible. Noor (2000: 70) argues that men's honour slumbers when women are fetching drinkable water from faraway places to cook, wash clothes and dishes, give baths to children and fill the bucket for all male family members to take a bath. Men's honour remains satisfied when she cuts grass for dozens of animals. But if a woman smiles, wears clean clothes or talks to some other man, their honour becomes aroused.¹⁴⁵ A man in Sindhi rural society determines the boundaries of his honour at his own pace. Quasmee (2000: 56) states that: 'Although these women keep their bodies fully covered, however the critical eyes of their husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and other male or even senior female relatives gaze angrily on them. Their every gesture is weighed on the parameters of honour'.

Hoodbai (2000: 8) calls it a power-game, and Black-Michaud (1975: 179) maintains that 'acts of violence carried out in the name of honour may always ultimately be seen as moves in the struggle for power and dominance'. Power is a central subject of honour-related accusations and conflicts. Men exercise and impose their supremacy to terrorise and subjugate the women

¹⁴³ My translation.

¹⁴⁴ My translation.

¹⁴⁵ My translation.

and other people around them: ‘Power exercised in the guise of honour may be viewed as a culturally legitimized demonstration of power. When honour is at stake, action is called for and the use of power is justified’ (Aase, 2002: 8). Whether honour is at stake or not, by their acts of accusation and killing men gain admiration from the circle in which they live, since eventually a man is declared triumphant after committing any crime in the name of honour because in a tribal culture, the man is always right.¹⁴⁶ The superiority of a man is unchallenged to the extent that if he suspects any woman of being *kari* (irrespective of her age or relation to him), his suspicion is sufficient grounds for killing her (Shoro, 1997). Women would never be permitted to speak in their own defence (Shaikh, 2000; Kundhar, 2000). Women live under the terror that any man of their family can kill someone outside due to rage, enmity or over some dispute, then enter the home and declare any woman of the family as *kari* with the murdered one and consequently kill her too (Khan, 2006; Shah, 1998; Farooque, 2000). Thus, the power-game maintains the male dominance of the patriarchal society.

In this tribal culture, in cases of honour killing: ‘the killer is treated as a hero, especially if he murders both the alleged man and woman. If he is arrested by the police then, after serving a short term of imprisonment, he is considered to be more worthy of respect by the tribal people’¹⁴⁷ (Noor, 2000: 70). In fact, in most cases of honour killings, both the killer’s and the deceased’s family prefers the tribal *jirga* to settle the issue instead of going to court. Feudal lords, that is, *waderas* or *sardars*, hold the *jirgas*, which have been ruled to be illegal and unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Pakistan (Abbas, 1999; Ahmed, 2000). Although it is illegal, the rule of tradition is often more powerful than the rule of law (*Asian Human Rights Commission*, 2009). Perhaps this is the reason why the government of Pakistan has not yet taken any strong steps to curb this illegal system, which violates the right of people to a fair trial. Amnesty International (1999) confirms that: ‘Generally, the attitude of the state towards the *jirga* system has been supportive’.

The *Jirga* System

At present there are three parallel legal systems prevalent in Pakistan: the formal system

¹⁴⁶ My translation.

¹⁴⁷ My translation.

(statute, secular state law and *Sharia* law), the informal system (*jirga* and *panchayat*¹⁴⁸) and a sub-legal system called FCR¹⁴⁹ customary law, which is applicable to the FATA.¹⁵⁰ ‘The first of these includes the common law as well as the civil law, which were formally introduced by the British during their rule in the Indian subcontinent’ (Khan, 2006: 227) but have been amended with the passage of time. Despite being banned by the government, the *jirga* system, one of the major tribal systems of justice embedded in the Pakistani rural structure, is actively practiced to settle local cases and disputes. Hussain (2006) states that such councils are managed by local elites (feudal lords) and are composed only of men, particularly those who are already influential and hold inherited power within the *brotherly*, clan or tribe. The *jirgas* are normally held in the *havelis*¹⁵¹ of the *waderas* but a report by Amnesty International (1999) confirms that the *jirga* is mainly held in government circuit houses and that the local district administration and the police also participate, which shows that government institutions are also involved in the *jirga* process. According to Alavi (1976), the local police station is fully controlled by a local *wadera*. Even a poor man, if robbed, cannot register a FIR¹⁵² until the local *wadera* instructs the police station to do so. The influential local *waderas* have managed to have their own men appointed to the civil administration to secure their hold over people’s lives. Regarding the method and construction of a *jirga*, Bhanbhro *et al.* (2013) explain that:

The *jirga* is headed by a *sardar* or a *wadera* who is unanimously agreed by both warring parties. Each party nominates two or more representatives, commonly known as advisors, to lead their case in the *jirga*. The main objective of the *jirga* is to restore the balance by compensation for damage and not to find truth and punish the perpetrator. The man who kills to restore honour is morally and legally supported by the *jirga* and considered as a holder of honour. In the settlement of a case of honour murder by a *jirga*, women who are killed or freed are not considered victims but the guilty party. The man to whom a woman (wife, daughter or sister) belongs has to murder to repair his honour. In *jirga* he is considered the victim as he has suffered loss, first to his honour and then of the woman he has to kill. In a *Jirga*, both warring parties are bound to accept the verdict of the *jirga*. (Bhanbhro *et al.*, 2013: 1471)

Along with other tribal disputes, in most cases of *karo-kari*, a *jirga* is conducted in order to settle the enmity and restore peace (Jafri, 2008). For example, if in a case of *karo-kari* the *karo*

¹⁴⁸ Another name for the illegal courts.

¹⁴⁹ Frontier Crimes Regulations.

¹⁵⁰ Federal Tribal Areas (northern Pakistan).

¹⁵¹ *Waderas*’ palatial type of house.

¹⁵² First information report.

runs away and the *kari* is murdered, the *karo*'s family requests a *jirga*. In the *jirga*, the *karo*'s relatives appeal for the life of the *karo* to be spared (Lari, 2011). Upon this request, the *jirga* decides how to provide justice to the offended family. A penalty or fine could be taken in the form of cash, jewellery or girls. The *jirga* decides how much cash or how many cattle or girls are to be taken from the *karo*'s family to give to the murderer (who has killed a woman as a *kari* – maybe a father, brother, uncle or husband) (Ahmed, 2000; Thebo, 2000). In these situations, women from daughters and sisters to nieces and cousins are to be given to the murderer's family in order to stop further hostility (Siddiquie, 2005; Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2012). Shah (1998) reveals that the common acceptable decision is either to give one girl older than seven years or two girls if they are younger than seven. Since no-one likes to give two girls, in some cases parents break under-age girls' milk teeth to make their age seem to be more than seven.

The *jirga* system has sidestepped the government's formal judicial system for a number of reasons. The tribal system provides quicker, cheaper and maybe lasting solutions suited to their sense of justice and the standards to which they are accustomed. It clearly finds in favour of men because *karo-kari* (killing a woman, a man or both) is not considered a crime by the *jirga* but a legitimate action of the man whose family has been dishonoured (PDI, 2005). In addition, the *jirga* system helps the *waderas* to keep the population under their control by providing them with the required gendered justice. Conversely, as verified by Bhanbhro *et al.* (2013: 1471): 'This approach has also conveyed the impression that the rule of law as enshrined in the constitution and statutory law is dispensable and replaceable by alternate systems such as the *jirga* system'. However, the rapid growth in cases of honour killing testifies to how this type of court system works. The *jirgas* held by the powerful men have failed to stop or curb honour killings as the *sardars* do not deal strictly with the killers but maintain their feudal authority. Hussaini (2009: 113) states that: 'Hundreds, if not thousands of *jirgas* have yet to be replaced by courts of law. The edicts ordained by *jirgas* and militants are in open violation of the laws of the land'.

Another purpose of the *jirga* in cases of *karo-kari* is to decide what to do with those women who are not killed but are declared *karis*. In the structure of the masculine-constructed *jirga*, women's rights are being consistently violated (Iqbal, 2006). They have no representatives in the *jirga* and have to follow whatever is decided in the *faislo*. Mostly, after hearing the

pronouncement that they will be killed as *kari*, women run to a safe place for protection, and the safest place is considered to be the *haveli*. Those *karis* who are held at the *havelis* are maltreated and live as concubines (Naqvi & Korai, 2000). However, most *karis* have to be sold in *jirgas* as *dohi*¹⁵³ because their relatives disown them once they are known as *kari* (Malik, 2000). Bhatti (2000: 94) reports that: ‘In 1999, 64 *karis* were given to the *waderas*, 29 of them were sold from RS40,000 to 80,000 but only a 20% share was given to the *kari*’s relatives, the rest of the amount went to the *waderas*’. However, Iqbal (2006: 5) claims that: ‘the woman declared as *kari* by the *jirga* is usually killed by gunshot, burning with oil, acid throwing, flogging and sometimes through blood poisoning’. For most women threatened with death, but who for one reason or another are not killed, the *haveli* might be the easiest option to save their lives as everyone in a village knows its location. However, some state-run shelters are also available and provide refuge to women in trouble. The important point is that no woman can go directly to these shelters for safety. First she has to go to the police and then the police will present her to the court. In court, a magistrate has the power either to send her to a shelter or to hand her over to her relatives, with her consent.

State-Run Shelters

In Pakistan, the kind of shelter available to a significant number of female survivors of violence is called a *darulaman*.¹⁵⁴ These government and non-government *darulamans* provide temporary shelter to those women who, due to various difficulties, have been abandoned by their families and referred by the courts of law (Ahmad, 2000; Khan, 2006). These shelters have a management system to provide the necessary support to these women. They are kept in the shelters until a decision on their cases is reached by the courts or they come to some agreement with their families and the families take them back (Aftab *et al.*, 2008). *IRIN* Asia (2012) reports the purpose of such shelters:

As of October 2002, there were 13 state-run women’s shelters in the country, according to a report of the Human Rights Watch, while another six were run by women’s NGOs, providing a secure environment with free food, boarding and lodging facilities to homeless women. In a conservative society like Pakistan, where 70 to 80 per cent of women face domestic violence in the form of physical, sexual and verbal

¹⁵³ *Dohi* means a proven offender.

¹⁵⁴ Shelter homes are called *darulamans* in Pakistani local languages.

abuse, such centres were established to give women support in their hour of need. (IRIN Asia, 2012)

Despite the fact that these shelters are refuges for women who, because of various life-threatening circumstances, escape from their homes, numerous negative narratives are also presented about them by the media. In general, these sanctuaries appear in the news in Pakistan because of financial corruption, the absence of basic necessities, lack of medical facilities and the harsh attitude of the management, including allegations of sexual, psychological and emotional abuse and threats¹⁵⁵ (Bhatti, 2000). Based upon these reports, human rights activists claim that the existing state-run women's shelters are no more than 'dumping grounds', 'virtual prisons' and 'sub-prisons' (see *Daily Times*, 14 February 2008). In Sindh, there are four state-run shelter homes in the cities of Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana. Some of the websites operated by the government of Sindh claim that these shelter houses provide facilities for the residents such as boarding and lodging, medical treatment, legal aid, religious education and vocational training so that these women can live as respectable citizens after their rehabilitation. However, some non-government organizations describe the deplorable condition of these shelters. For instance, Dr Ismat Rauf, who visited the Karachi shelter house, complains (see *Dawn*, 13 August 2007): 'there is not much I can do, given the lack of equipment and facilities. Even the medicines we get are donated by the Edhi Centre'.¹⁵⁶ Human rights activists have called repeatedly for drastic reforms in the existing structure of the state-run shelters. They see a dire need for counselling and psycho-social care for the women. Nuzhat Shirin, regional coordinator of the Aurat Foundation said: 'We have been expressing concerns over the state of these refuges for a long time, but the authorities turned a deaf ear to our recommendations' (IRIN Asia, 2012).

On numerous occasions, the inhabitants of these shelters have tried and managed to run away. Jamal (*Dawn*, 13 August 2007) reports that in March 2007, the Karachi *darulaman* hit the news when a woman managed to run away from it. The *Daily Times* (14 February 2008) published news of the escape of several women from shelters located in Hyderabad (Sindh) and Rawalpindi (Punjab).¹⁵⁷ According to the news reports, the women who fled from the

¹⁵⁵ My translation.

¹⁵⁶ The Edhi Foundation is a charity founded by the prominent Pakistani philanthropist, social activist and humanitarian Abdul Sattar Edhi.

¹⁵⁷ Punjab is the most populous of the four provinces of Pakistan.

centres by breaking their walls and windows, called the *darulamans*: ‘no less than a prison’. Those who escaped from the Hyderabad shelter, when brought back in a nearby village by the police, levelled serious charges of harassment and abuse against the management of the houses.

Karachi, home to nearly 16 million people, has only one state-run women’s shelter. For most of the past two decades, however, the shelter has housed only women sent there by court order. Even as a refuge, moreover, the *darulaman* fails: despite a grant of RS20 million sanctioned last year by the city government, there are no recreational or vocational training facilities, barely any medical facilities. (Jamal, *Dawn*, 13 August 2007)

More recently, according to a report published in the *Daily Kawish* on 10 May 2012, an occupant of the *darulaman* at Sukker, Saeeda Khoso, accused Munawar Shah (an employee of the Sukker *darulaman*) of raping her. Sindh High Court took notice of the serious allegation, immediately suspended Munawar Shah and ordered a full enquiry into the *darulaman* at Sukker within three days. Indeed, the protection and safety of women in the *darulamans* has always been a critical issue¹⁵⁸ (Doud, 2000). Women are having to manage almost without basic medical and everyday facilities and complaints about negligence are very frequent. These women are from different areas, but they are sent to these *darulamans* because cases against them are processed in the city courts. Once these women enter, they cannot leave without obtaining permission from the court (Noor, 2000; Khan, 2006).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the background to honour killings in Sindh and the current social and political conditions of Sindh. When people migrated to the province, they brought with them traditions including honour killing. The discussion in the chapter has considered the contribution of Sindh to Pakistan’s GDP with the purpose of showing that in return Sindh does not receive enough funding to progress. The rural/urban division, which results in the majority of Sindh’s population living below the poverty line and in conditions of poor social welfare and security, has been another factor increasing the miseries of the people.

¹⁵⁸ My translation.

Although Sindh High Court has imposed a ban on the holding of *jirgas*, trials of *karo-kari* are still being conducted under the tribal justice system in which *sardars* treat honour killing not as a crime but as an honourable act. In these *jirgas*, the killers are compensated in various ways whereas the accused women have no redress but to accept whatever punishment is suggested. I have also examined the limited options available to those women who manage to escape murder, which are either to take shelter in the *havelis* or to go to the police and eventually to the shelters. In general, the shelters to which the women go lack the basic necessities of life and therefore largely fail to provide any relief to the women. Human rights organisations have expressed concerns about the management of these shelters.

In the next chapter, I shall discuss the methodology which I followed and describe the process of conducting my fieldwork in northern Sindh, my experience of identifying, meeting and interviewing both female and male participants, how their responses caused me to adjust my methodology and methodological concerns about conducting this research, as well as some reflections on the ethical considerations, and on the collection and analysis of the data.

Chapter Three: Researching Honour Killing in Sindh: Methodological Issues

This study was inspired by a desire on my part to investigate the motives behind honour killing in Sindh. My main research question is whether the practice of honour killing in Sindh is still guided by the concept of honour or whether other elements are also in operation. I chose a qualitative research method due to the flexibility which it offers for understanding and exploring the issue from the points of view of those who are involved. To discover the impact of tribal and social standards on the lives of potential survivors and perpetrators, I decided to use the method of informal, semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews. This method would allow me comprehend the depth of the matter through the detailed accounts of women who had been threatened with death and men who had killed in the name of honour. As Mason (2002: 225) states: 'interview methodology begins from the ... elements of the social by asking people to talk, and to gather or construct knowledge by listening to and interpreting what they say and how they say it'. To understand the circumstances behind the killings, I designed my interviews to chart the course of the women's and men's lives in order to find how violence is embedded in them.

One of the broadly acknowledged aims of feminist research is 'to allow people to speak for themselves' (Cottle, 1978: xii): to let people tell their own stories so that the unheard can be heard. The detailed personal narratives of the people most closely involved in an issue have to be used by a researcher to explore and analyse their experiences in order to create an agenda for change or reform. Feminist research, in a broad sense, has to respect and value people's thoughts and words regardless of gender since people suffer in different ways even in the same social context. Millen (1997: 6) states that: 'any research may be considered 'feminist' which incorporates two main aims; a sensitivity to the role of gender within society and the differential experiences of males and females'. The principal aim of my research is to hear from women and men who are likely to have different perspectives on honour killing even though they are the part of the same culture.

Much has been written about honour killing from various perspectives but research that sees these killings as beyond the 'norm of honour' is missing. The voices of the people who are part of the killings, the threats and the traditional sphere of honour are absent. I was, however, aware that in my case, the impression which I give as an educated person who is studying at a

foreign university: ‘may possibly create an imbalanced situation and interviewees may feel under pressure’ (Finch, 1984: 4). Being able to promote rapport and impartiality with the interviewees was the main requirement for my research to be successful. According to Oakley (1981), the researcher should invite intimacy by being open to the participants’ queries because the interview is a mutual interaction.

I started my fieldwork in July 2012 with the intention of exploring honour killing in northern Sindh, in Pakistan. As a woman, because of the difficulties of carrying out sensitive research in a highly patriarchal and gendered society where law and order do not exist, I needed male protection for my personal safety. Before leaving the UK for Sindh for the fieldwork, I contacted two trusted male intermediaries, Mr Nasir¹⁵⁹ a government officer and Mr Nabeel¹⁶⁰ a lawyer, to ask them to help me to overcome the likely obstacles that I might encounter in the process of data collection. Both of these intermediaries belonged to upper Sindh and were known to my husband, and they knew the traditional values and culture far better than I did.

My first challenge was to find and interview women who had been threatened with death and were at various refuges. To visit those shelters for research purposes needed special permission from government authorities. For me, as a researcher seeking permission to visit and conduct interviews at these shelters was not easy. However, my intermediaries had successfully obtained the necessary permission for me to conduct interviews at various refuges. The next challenge was to find men who had killed on the pretext of *karo-kari* and had not been imprisoned but were willing to admit killing and to share their accounts with me. Both of my intermediaries helped me to gain access to such killers. Later, when I reached upper Sindh, I discovered that my intermediaries had already also arranged a visitor’s permission from the jail authorities for me to conduct interviews with convicted killers in jails. Despite the fact that I had a well-organized plan for the data collecting process, throughout the process, I was nevertheless confronted by inevitable hurdles and unexpected situations.

I faced many disappointments when I travelled from one village to another but was unable to meet the killers at the places agreed in advance through my intermediaries. Some of the killers, however, did fulfil the agreement and turned up at the place agreed for an interview.

¹⁵⁹ Pseudonym.

¹⁶⁰ Pseudonym.

Since the success of my research was dependent upon the trust between me and my interviewees, my major responsibility was to create an appropriate rapport so that the interviewees could express themselves openly. Despite all my attempts to achieve this, some interviews were still unsuccessful because after admitting the killings, the killers refused to discuss the matter.

Throughout the data collection process, Scott's (1998) comment that 'Feminist researchers value flexibility and emotion as a source of insight' not only encouraged me to promote rapport and impartiality with both the male and female interviewees but also helped me to listen to long and emotional accounts. In this chapter, I shall describe the whole process of my fieldwork in chronological order, first explaining my research design, then discussing the issues which arose during the interviews, and finally describing the data processing and writing up.

Research Design

Silverman (2001: 25) advises that: 'the choice between different research methods should depend upon what you are trying to find out'. The aim of my research was to explore the motives behind honour killings from the points of view of those involved. I intended to interview participants who in one way or another had been affected by the constraint or construction of their understanding of 'honour'. It appeared that this complex and sensitive topic could not be moulded into a set of standard questions with pre-set options for responses. I wanted to explore the influence of crucial moments in the lives of people and how violence, honour and collusion are embedded in their lives. This only seemed possible through the use of informal, semi-structured, in-depth, open-ended interviews, what Kahan and Cannell (1957: 149) call 'a conversation with a purpose'. This method would allow me comprehend the depth of the matter through the detailed accounts and narratives of women who had been threatened with death and men who had killed in the name of honour.

My research on honour killing in northern Sindh depended on recording the accounts of people's lives in order to develop an understanding about this specific subject. Moreover, this interview technique is ideal for a researcher 'who has little hope of gaining a large and representative sample' (Plummer, 1983: 86). Thus, their narrations would lead and allow me

to develop a more comprehensive picture of the issue by exploring individuals' lives, their backgrounds and personal concepts about honour, pride and honour killing. I intended to let people express their thoughts about honour killing and explain how their lives had been affected by that cultural tradition through face-to-face interviews, 'a method that has been used by feminist researchers to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect' (Kvale, 1996: 6).

My first intention was to interview the investigators of honour killings. Since investigators should investigate the cases thoroughly, observe and take statements from the killers, from witnesses and from the relatives of the deceased and the accused and after reaching a conclusion present a detailed investigation report to the court, they should have a complete record of and views on the cases. I realised, however, that by doing this I would not be able to listen directly to the killers and the women threatened with death, so I changed this plan. In addition, the integrity of the investigation reports is not always credible due to the allegation that the police take bribes to change reports.

My next thought was to conduct interviews with convicted killers either in jail or outside. When I discussed the idea with my first intermediary, Mr Nasir explained that the killers in jail would be waiting for bail to be granted by the court, so at such a crucial time they might consider me as a part of the investigation team and they might deliberately try to mislead me by giving false information. He was of the opinion that the greater numbers of killers take advantage of the provision of compromise and therefore they are released from jail sooner or later or are not even arrested, so they have no fear of revealing anything about the killings. He suggested that I interview them once I reached Sindh, as they feel comfortable and willing to speak about what they have done and how they did it.

Although data could be gathered from male offenders, I also needed to see things from the perspective of the women directly affected. Cook and Fonow (1990: 80) suggest that the point of feminist research is 'to lead to change women's lives', but when I thought about visiting refuges, obtaining permission from the relevant legal authorities appeared to be a hurdle. How to conduct interviews without any interference was another question. Because of my previous experience as a journalist, I realized that the women would naturally be under the pressure of circumstances and might be reluctant to speak. However, I was motivated by the thought that

the results of the discussion could depend very much upon the trust that I could generate with my interviewees, the atmosphere of the interview and giving them a sense of safety to talk openly.

The Interview Theme

In order to understand the circumstances behind the killings, I designed my interview questions in a flexible way, structured to be informal and open-ended, in order to cover nearly all aspects of my interviewees' lives. While designing the questions for the women who had been labelled as *karis* and were in protective custody in refuges, my idea was to explore the domestic and social situation that had eventually forced them to seek refuge. My questions were designed to explore the women's lives from their childhood, their life before marriage, the mode of marriage, life after marriage, their view of the norm of honour and their hopes for their future life (see Table 1).

Table 1: Interview themes for women

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Sub-topics</i>
Life before marriage.	Tribal and parental background, siblings, childhood, favourite games, education and work.
Life after marriage.	Mode of marriage, relations with the husband and in-laws, financial situation, children.
How violence, honour and collusion are embedded in their lives.	Views about men, honour and honour killing. Reasons how and why they were threatened with death.
Future expectations.	After leaving the <i>darulaman</i> , what would their life to be like and what hopes do they have for the future.

The interview questions with the men were slightly different for two reasons; first, according to whom a man had killed (mother, sister, wife, daughter or other kin) and second, whether the

killer had killed both *karo* and *kari* or just *kari* (as the literature suggests that a *karo* is seldom killed alone). In the interviews with men who had killed in the name of honour, either a woman as *kari* or both *karo-kari*, I set out to explore their parental, tribal, social and educational backgrounds and to extend this to their family life and their mode of marriage and to the actual killing. This included their standards about honour and women in order to explore the detailed circumstances behind such killings by asking questions about the justifications for the killing (see Table 2).

Table 2: Interview themes for men

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Sub-topics</i>
Life before marriage.	Tribal and parental background, siblings, childhood, favourite games, education and profession.
Life after marriage.	Mode of marriage, wife's and in-laws' attitudes, children.
How violence, honour and collusion are embedded in their lives.	Views about women, the concept of adultery and honour killing. What made them to become killers?
Advantages and disadvantages of the killing.	Life in jail or life after the murder. Justifications for killing. Future plans.

Overall, for both genders, I planned to vary the questions so that the pattern of the interview should appear flexible and the talk should be a kind of conversation. Each question should link naturally with the next so that interviewees would not feel themselves under pressure and they should be able to move smoothly from one point to another. I did not use my position as interviewer to control the responses of the interviewees and that flexibility enabled me to listen to each participant's individual circumstances and experiences passionately.

Ethical Issues

I thought carefully about a variety of fundamental ethical problems¹⁶¹ that might arise throughout the research process. The participants in my research were women who had been threatened with death and who were residing at various shelters, and men inside and outside jail who had killed on the pretext of honour. To access the shelters, the jails and the killers, I had to seek the co-operation of my two intermediaries in the relevant districts of upper Sindh.

In this particular context, supplying information sheets and obtaining written consent would not be feasible as most of participants would not be able to read or write. I therefore informed my participants orally about the aims of my research. I also needed to record their verbal consent for the data which I intended to collect from them and for the use of a tape recorder to record their accounts. I informed them about their rights and that they could choose not to answer any questions, or to stop the interview at any time. From the ethical point of view Jaggar (2008: 460) suggests that researchers should ‘respect the dignity and integrity of the researched’ and ‘not to treat the researched as just research objects’ (Thorne, 2008: 461). I therefore explained my intentions and assured them that the data would be used only for research purposes and that only I and my academic supervisor would have access to it. Also, their personal identity and any details related to names, locations and other information that might identify them would be protected through the use of pseudonyms and by disguising the precise location.¹⁶² In order to show respect for the interviewees’ safety, protection, autonomy and self-respect, I offered them appropriate links to free legal advice, and to medical advice for the women, and I had prepared myself beforehand with such relevant information.

My previous experience has taught me that the staff in the refuges (women only) are likely to often not be very feminist in outlook and that they could try to create some obstacles during the interviews by interference. To avoid this, I had accured legal permission (which had been obtained on my behalf by my intermediaries), which would clearly explain to the staff at the

¹⁶¹ My study involved human subjects. Some of the participants, particularly the women inhabiting shelter homes, and the convicted killers in the jails were particularly vulnerable to official surveillance and I would be dealing with sensitive issues. Due to the sensitivity of the research issue, I thought carefully about a variety of the fundamental ethical problems/issues that could arise throughout the research and interview process. In addition to the ethical preparations, which I have described in the text, I obtained ethical clearance from the appropriate committee of the University of York before embarking on the fieldwork.

¹⁶² All the people involved in the research and all the villages referred to are given pseudonyms.

outset that these interviews would be private and confidential. One of the main responsibilities of a social researcher is to safeguard the interests of those involved. Since the wellbeing of my participants was my priority, as a matter of precaution I remained assured that none of the staff would be around at the time of the interviews in order to maintain complete secrecy and to avoid unnecessary risk to my interviewees. I intended to collect the data carefully and vigilantly as I anticipated that the authorities running the refuges or some of the NGOs working on similar projects might be interested in my research but I was determined not to let them have access to my data or to the personal details of the participants beyond the fact that the refuge staff would know who I had interviewed. I was prepared to provide a short report of my findings to such interested parties but they would have no access to my data.

To be supportive and sympathetic is the responsibility of a researcher but for me it was essential to maintain a critical distance from my male interviewees. I decided not to interview any male killers in their own homes or in the presence of their relatives or companions. In the tribal culture of upper Sindh, it seems inconceivable that a woman should speak to men on such sensitive topics. Because of the multiple safety-related issues, I decided to take my husband with me in case I encountered any unexpected or potential threatening situations.

To reduce the risk, I thought about adopting various precautions, as I was aware of the fact that this kind of research carries a range of potential risks to my own safety. My appearance should not be that of a stranger or a modern westernized woman. The ‘impression management’ techniques suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 83) ‘to decide an outfit carefully’ were helpful advice for me. By wearing simple clothes, covering my head and wearing no jewellery I could develop my interviewees’ confidence and build their trust in me so that they might speak freely about their personal lives. I planned to wear the typical cotton dress of the particular area (loose and simple). I would cover my head and body with a long *dupatta*¹⁶³ and not wear any make-up except for a light lip-gloss. I would plait my hair or tie it back with a hair band. I was conscious that the usage of even common English words might create a notion that I was working for some international organizations and they might be reluctant to speak to me, so instead I planned to use typical Sindhi and Seraiki words to avoid

¹⁶³ A long scarf-type cloth-sheet to cover the head and breast and to wrap around the body (for women).

any language barrier or sense of hostility. Above all, I knew that the success of my interviews lay in the facial expression I wore and the genuine empathy I had for them.

Meeting Interviewees

Before going to Pakistan, I began to contact intermediaries who might be helpful in arranging meetings with women threatened with death and with men who had killed in the name of honour. My intermediaries were very confident that they could obtain the necessary permission from refuge authorities and could also allow me access to killers. On the basis of my previous experience, I hoped that the women who had been alleged to be *karis* and understood that in a tribal culture the penalty for such an allegation is death might nevertheless be willing to speak to me. This confidence was based on the fact that I would be interviewing women from the same province as myself, that I could speak their language and that I was aware of their traditional values.

In addition, in the opinion of my intermediaries, it would not be difficult to interview killers as hundreds of them live there and are always willing to speak on the topic as they consider honour killing a matter of pride. In fact, in response to my concern about whether men would be prepared to speak to me about the killings, the intermediaries confidently replied that they would be more than willing to talk about their achievements as they feel that their 'act of killing for honour' is above the law and that they are the bearers of the traditional values. As an example, Mr Nasir told me about a man who had killed his wife in an honour killing and freely admitted it at a seminar before an audience.

I had never been to upper Sindh before; it is an area that is infamous due to blatant regard for law and order, kidnapping for ransom, the frequent murder by *dacoits*¹⁶⁴ for personal and tribal enmities, and honour killings. Because of my awareness of the particular situation in the area, I wanted my husband to be with me for my personal safety and to ensure my respectability, although I realise that the area is dangerous for men also.

¹⁶⁴ Members of a band of armed robbers.

The location which I selected for data collection was to be the upper Sindh, mainly Larkana, Jacobabad and Sukkur districts, for the principal reason that honour killing is endemic there and that the two cities, Larkana and Sukkur, have shelters and refuge for women. A total of 8,539 cases of violence against women were reported in Pakistan in 2011 and the largest number (133) of incidences of violence against women in Sindh were reported in Sukkur, closely followed by Jacobabad with 132 (The Aurat Foundation, Karachi, 2012). These figures made the possibilities of finding and interviewing male killers very high.

On our arrival in Larkana, Mr Nasir greeted us. The temperature was 46° and it was Ramadan: I realized that the timing was not ideal. However, I knew that I could not wait until winter. On the way to our hotel, Mr Nasir briefed me about the contacts he had made with killers who had consented to be interviewed. He told me that he had already spoken to the refuge authorities and had explained my research purpose. He also told me that he and my other intermediary had been contacting the friends and neighbours of killers who knew about the killings and the killers. Through this network of friends, my intermediaries had been receiving contacts about killers who were willing to discuss their experiences.

He further informed me that he and the other intermediary had talked to the jail authorities to obtain an official letter giving me permission to visit jails and he discussed the possibilities of interviewing convicted killers there. I considered it a challenge to listen to imprisoned killers giving accounts of honour killings. However, I was not sure whether they would be willing to speak to me at all or whether I would be able to conduct long, time-consuming, open-ended interviews in jails. The whole prospect added a little concern to my sense of safety, but I trusted my intermediaries and was confident that they, with the approval of the jail authorities, would arrange a safe and appropriate system for me to conduct the interviews.

As soon as I reached the hotel, I was told that the first killer had arrived. Mr Nasir had told me that this man had killed his wife in an honour killing but that he now attended and participated in seminars about honour killings in order to raise awareness of *karo-kari*. The hotel administration agreed to let me have a separate room where I recorded my first interview with 83-year-old Sikandar. He had left school at a very early age because of the severe corporal punishment by his teachers. His farmer father had passed away when he was eight years old. He had two brothers and two sisters. He had married his first cousin whom he killed when his

mother in-law told him that his wife was *kari*. He went to jail for life imprisonment but was released after five years on the basis of his good character. He married for a second time and now had eight sons and two daughters. Sikandar felt sorry about killing his first wife and did not see any honour or humanity in honour killing. For this very first interviewee, to have shown remorse in this way surprised me. Was it due to his age, perhaps, or had he always regretted it? These questions found answers when he told me that in the jail and after being freed, he found a company of Marxist friends and the discussions changed his thinking about honour-related crimes.

I considered the long, uninterrupted interview a good beginning. After the interview, my husband and I went for dinner at Mr Nasir's home. While we were there, he received a telephone call from the assistant director of the Larkana refuge and I was asked to speak to her. She welcomed me and we agreed to visit the refuge the next morning. That was another positive development.

The next day, at the refuge in Larkana, we were received by the assistant director, Mrs Talat, who had been working there since March 2009, and soon the matron of the house Mrs Talha, who had been working there for two years, joined us. They were humble and cooperative women. As I had expected, there was no electricity. I was told by the administrators that altogether sixteen women and four children were in the refuge at the time, eleven of whom had been sent by the courts for various domestic-violence related issues and the other five women were alleged to be *karis*. I requested their registration forms to see the details of their cases and I was provided with photocopies of the forms.

Before the interviews, I wanted to have a look around the inside of the refuge in order to have a clear picture in my mind about how these women were living with young children. The assistant director explained that a government minister gave the building as a shelter for women. It was quite a new two-storey building consisting of six large rooms, a spacious hall, six toilets, a kitchen and a storeroom. I counted fifty single beds in rooms with six cupboards. Each bed was under a fan. The hall had a television, two fans and two air coolers. Outside the rooms was an electric water cooler. There were also two freezers, two generators and a washing machine.

I was told that RS3000 per woman per month was provided by the government for the women's food while they lived here. Raw food was distributed to these women each week by the administration and the women themselves prepared the food. When I asked about the women's and the children's literacy and other skills, the assistant director informed me that three teachers had been appointed to teach them. A skilled teacher came to teach sewing (there were seven sewing machines); an adult literacy teacher and a religious education teacher also came to teach them. But I did not receive any clear response about the education of the children who were at the refuge with their mothers. The total staff (excluding these two officers) was nine members, of which four were women and worked inside the refuge and five armed men were guards to safeguard the refuge.

I was introduced to all the women who were gathered in the hall along with their children. As a Sindhi ritual, I shook hands with every one and asked about their wellbeing. I sat with them for about half an hour and the matrons explained the reasons for my visit. I asked the women whether they would consent to be interviewed (a question that had already been asked by the matron). The women who were there for different domestic violence cases other than honour killing were also willing to share their stories. It seemed rude of me to refuse them abruptly so I spent some time with them and showed my concern and sympathy towards them. As Finch (1984) explains, women can contribute significantly to the establishment of a friendly relationship between the researcher and the researched. During the conversation, I explained that my research was about honour killing. They became excited and wanted to speak. Since some women were with their children, I asked them to decide among themselves who wanted to be interviewed first.

I was given a separate room where I conducted interviews with five of the women. The first interview was with 25-year-old Naheed. She was an uneducated woman. Her father worked as a labourer and she had two sisters and one brother. She had married four years earlier and had no children. She had been allegedly called *kari* by her husband and had therefore been sent to the Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She had not decided anything yet, but she needed to live in the *darulaman* until protection was provided for her by the court. She was a bold, talkative and determined woman who said that 'killing is a routine business in Sindh'. She used the

word ‘friend’,¹⁶⁵ a highly unusual word to be used by a woman for a man as in this culture the word ‘friend’ is used only for the same sex.

My second interviewee was eighteen-year-old Shabana. She had gone to school in her childhood but had learned nothing as no teachers came to teach. Her father had passed away before her birth. Her mother had been sold (married to another tribe for money by her maternal grandparents). She had one sister and one brother. She had left home with her cousin (whom she loved) after a forced engagement for money by her grand parents. She had been found and taken back by the *wadera* of the village and then forcibly married by her grandparents. She was scared of being killed as *kari* so she had taken shelter at the Larkana *darulaman*. She was determined to obtain a divorce from her present husband and marry her cousin.

My third participant, 26-year-old Nazia, had studied to year five. Her father was a small farmer and she had three sisters and four brothers. She had a good life at her parents’ home until her father became an addicted gambler. After selling his land and home, he sold his two eldest daughters for money and later Nazia was also sold for RS45,000 to her paternal cousin. She had been accused of being *kari* by her husband after five years of marriage. She had no children. She went first to the Karachi *darulaman*. Now she was at the Larkana *darulaman* and was determined to live there until her divorce. She was looking for protection from the court. She was a courageous and talkative woman.

The fourth interviewee, Fatima, was 55 and had only a little education. Her father had worked as a labourer. She had been brought up like an orphan and she had seven sisters and five brothers. She had five children. She was alleged to be *kari* by her husband and had therefore been sent to the Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She was unable to decide anything except to obtain a divorce from her husband. She had no money to have a lawyer to fight her case. She was worried about her protection in the event of her leaving the *darulaman*. She was clearly very gloomy, upset and sick and she needed medical support.

Shahadat (30) was my fifth interviewee. She was uneducated and her father worked as a

¹⁶⁵ In the tribal and rural culture of Pakistan, girls and women cannot use ‘friend’ to refer to a member of the opposite sex.

farmer; she had six sisters and six brothers. She was married in an exchange with another girl and that girl had been given to her uncle in marriage. Her four children were with her in the *darulaman*. Her husband has killed a man and threatened her as *kari* so she had been sent to Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She wanted a divorce from her husband and had requested protection from the court. She wanted to go with her father not with her husband. She asked me if I could redefine the concept of *ghairat* (honour).

The interview process took about nine hours. Holding five interviews in a day was quite a tough job as each account contained its own misery and pain. At the end of the day I was extremely exhausted. Although I had water with me (although it seemed rude to carry and drink water during the month of Ramadan), I avoided eating anything as my interviewees were fasting. During the whole day from 9.30am to 8.30pm the electricity came on only for two hours. It was an extremely hot day.

I could see the torn clothes of the bare-footed children. As Eid is considered a grand festival in Islamic countries, I asked my husband to buy dresses for these women and I gave some money to the children so that they could at least buy something new for Eid. That was nothing in comparison with what they did for me. They poured their hearts out to me unconditionally. They were facing cold-hearted cruelties but I tried to hide my tears from them. They were wearing very thick clothes in the extremely hot room but expressed their concern about my difficulty in facing the heat. I was overwhelmed by their care for me. As a gesture of thanks and empathy, I could only offer them these small gifts and a few links for free legal and medical advice.

The following day, we moved further north to the village of Hameed Khan. My intermediary Mr Nasir, who accompanied us, hoped that there would be six killers to be interviewed there, as a friend of his in this village had assured him. The issue was where to conduct the interviews as there is no concept of coffee shops in the villages where we could sit for some time and I could not take the risk of going to the interviewees' houses, so Mr Nasir asked his friend to allow us to use his house for a while. We crossed almost barren countryside, with clouds of dust and mud homes. On both sides of the wrecked road, I saw many labourers; among them were young children of about ten or twelve working in a temperature of 50°. The 2010 floods had broken the road completely. Throughout this journey, I did not see any

woman, veiled or unveiled.

The village of Hashmat Khan¹⁶⁶ is situated on the border with Baluchistan province. We were warmly greeted in typical Sindhi style by our hosts, *sardar* Fateh Khan and *sardar* Hussain Khan. Being *sardars*, they held *faislo* of many honour killing cases in *jirga*. I was offered the only chair. My intermediary introduced my husband and me to our hosts. It is a custom in interior Sindh and Baluchistan that when guests visit a respected family, they invite people from the village as a gesture of respect to meet them. Inside the boundary of the large *haveli*, outside the rooms, on a kind of veranda, there were four nicely arranged *charpaees*.¹⁶⁷ On the *charpae* on my right my husband and my intermediary sat. On the left-hand *charpae* sat our two hosts along with two other people. On the other two *charpaees* as many as eight men and two children were sitting. Most of them looked very poor but I was surprised to see that, unlike the accepted cultural norm, poor people were sitting with wealthy and were offered tea, biscuits and other refreshments in the same dishes. The visitors shook hands with the men and sat without taking any notice of me as if I were not present. That gesture made me feel that in this area of Sindh, unlike Sindhi culture, it is Balochi culture which rules. In Sindhi culture, shaking hands with a woman is a sign of respect, but the Balochi think the very opposite.

My main concern was to be careful about the potential ethical problems which these circumstances presented: my interviewees must have freely consented to be interviewed and no-one should be able to overhear the conversation. After nearly forty minutes, my first intermediary (who was receiving and sending text messages) told me that three of the expected killers had withdrawn because they thought that an interview could be of no importance. They had given their consent weeks previously but then they withdrew on the day of the interview. Mr Nabeel spoke to a fourth potential interviewee on his cell phone and then explained to me that he had gone crazy because of excessive use of drugs and may not be able to answer any questions. This was disappointing, as in this culture, it would be a matter of pride to the killers to come over and talk about their honourable deeds. The *sardars* and *waderas* respect the killers more than anyone else and treat them as brave people of the culture. However, I was told that two killers, one who had killed his wife and her lover and another who had killed his sister and a cousin were present and were willing to be interviewed. Our hosts told my

¹⁶⁶ A pseudonymous name for the village.

¹⁶⁷ A sort of Sindhi bed.

husband to stay with me and to take the interviewee to the other side of the veranda. I saw that it was a covered area where a *charpae* had already been arranged facing a chair. My husband firmly said that as a matter of ethics he would be watching us from a short distance but out of earshot. An elderly-looking man who had been staring at me stood up and asked me where to go. He was my interviewee.

He was aged about 60. He raised a point about my urban accent by asking me if I could understand the Sindhi language. I reassured him that I could. First he said that he had killed his wife. Then he said that she had been sold but did not tell me who had sold her or for what price and why she was sold. He appeared quite annoyed when he realized that his talking to me would not produce any payment. He said, 'Foreign countries give millions to you to help us and you waste the money on these useless things. Will the dead be made alive by your unnecessary ideas? See the havoc created by the rain and flood; our homes are ruined, we have nothing to eat and you want me to dig over old graves. I have spoken to you – will you not pay for it?' I remained silent and then politely said that this was not a foreign-aided project and that my sole purpose was to know about honour killing.

He remained sitting on the *charpae* but I left the place and returned to the chair where I had previously been sitting. Most of the men looked up: 'Too short?' my husband asked. Both of our hosts also wanted to know. 'Well, he was not willing to speak about the issue', I replied. I was a little disappointed but I had heard that killers create a fog of contradictions to avoid talking about the issue. So, I saw the incomplete interview from this perspective. I decided not to include this talk in my interviews, as it was full of contradictions. My intermediary Mr Nasir told me that I could interview the other person who had killed his sister and a cousin. 'As *karo-kari*?' I enquired. 'No, both *karis*' he replied. 'And what about the men involved with the women?' I asked. 'They ran away and have not been found yet' my intermediary responded. 'Is he ready?' I asked. 'He says so' was the response.

With my notebook, pen and tape recorder, I returned to the same place. A man who had been smoking followed me. I asked him to sit and after I had explained the purpose of the interview to him and gained his verbal consent to participate, I began to asking him questions. His name was Muhammad Yunus. He was a 26-year-old Rind Baloch undergraduate and had four brothers and seven sisters. First he admitted killing his sister and a girl cousin who had been

sitting outside their home with two boys. While he was talking, he changed his mind and eventually he clearly denied his involvement in the killings. He even denied his presence at the place even though he had just admitted that he witnessed the girls sitting with men outside their home in the middle of the night. He offered to let me talk to his cousin who had actually murdered both of the girls. I discontinued this interview also. There was no point in continuing with either of these interviews as the men were clearly trying to distract me with lies and obfuscation. The only important thing was that both of the interviewees belonged to the village of Garhee Khero, one of the most notorious areas regarding the increasing number of honour killings. Furthermore, 'the only graveyard for the alleged *karis* who have been killed (where the *karis* are buried without any respect) is situated in Garhee Khero and no one is allowed to offer prayers or pay respect in this graveyard'¹⁶⁸ (Korai, 2000: 31).

Our next destination was the *haveli* of our hosts in the village of Jan Khoso. Our hosts had arranged lunch for us. They expressed their deep concern over the rapid increase in cases of honour killings by calling it a big insult, but they were disappointed to have no resources to curb it. They linked it with poverty, unemployment, lack of education, recent natural calamities and various government policies which had provided no relief to the ordinary people. They were of the opinion that 25% to 35% of murders are pre-planned for achieving some personal benefits, as people have understood that in Pakistani law, killing in the name of honour is not considered as murder.

The *sardars* explained that whenever a man has been blamed as *karo* and has escaped, the relatives of the blamed person contact the *sardar* and request a *jirga* for *faislo* in order to save the life of the accused person. But since *jirgas* have now been declared illegal in Pakistan, the accused no longer have the *jirga* option. The *sardars* had the opinion that these *jirgas* were a quick means of providing justice to the deprived people. One of our hosts, Fateh Khan, called the ban on *jirgas* nothing but an increase in the troubles of the people who live in villages. He told us that once a husband had called his wife *kari*; she took refuge in his *haveli* (where we were sitting), but in a *jirga* she had been declared *garhee*.¹⁶⁹ She was handed back to her husband on the condition that he would not harm her and now they are living happily in a village.

¹⁶⁸ My translation.

¹⁶⁹ Not an offender (the opposite of *kari*).

I asked about the misuse of the *karis* when they come for shelter in the *havelies*. The *sardars* did not deny this but they did deny taking any benefits from these *jirgas* by saying that ‘no Khan *sardar* has ever encountered this kind of blame’. One of them defended other *sardars* who, according to him, took a quarter of the money received by the complainants from the accused’s family. The *sardars* said that the money was spent on providing food and temporary residence to people who request a *jirga*. Although I could not collect any interview data, the day was not wasted as I had an opportunity to meet and listen to the views of two *sardars* who had presided over many *jirgas* and to ask many questions which had occurred to me while I was writing the literature review for the research.

In mid-afternoon, we said good-bye to our hosts and started out for Jacobabad. The temperature was still 46°; labourers were still working on the barren dried land and there were no trees to provide shade. When I saw some greenery and small puddles, I asked the name of the village. My husband told me that it was Kaleem Mimsami, an area where people cannot travel after dark for fear of *dacoits*. Men were riding motor-bikes and bicycles. Some young children could be seen holding empty water cans in search of water. Here I saw some completely veiled women wearing shuttlecock type *burqas*; some women had wrapped their bodies and heads into a *chader*¹⁷⁰ with their faces half-covered.

Mr Nasir was with me throughout the journey but Mr Nabeel could not join me due to his professional responsibilities but he was in touch by cell phone. Both of my intermediaries were busy making contacts over the telephone with people who had had dealings with honour killers. Altogether, 22 killers had been contacted and had shown willingness to be interviewed, but four had already withdrawn and two were not willing to share their experiences related to honour killing with me. Why? A woman, a potential government agent or a legal officer in disguise? I thought myself. Because of the fairly disappointing day, I was a little anxious about whether other killers would speak to me or not. Mr Nabeel had already let his network know the address of our Jacobabad guesthouse and had arranged times for potential interviewees to turn up there.

We reached the guesthouse where my husband had already booked two rooms. As I was

¹⁷⁰ A large sheet of cloth to cover head, face and body.

unpacking, I heard a knock at the door. Mr Nasir had come to tell me that a killer had come for an interview with reference to Mr Nabeel's request with the excuse that he could not come during the daytime as he worked as a driver. My husband and Mr Nasir sat in the lounge of the guesthouse and I interviewed the killer in Mr Nasir's room which was immediately opposite the lounge. Satisfied that security was as close as possible and to ensure secrecy, I shut the doors of the room.

Majid was a 36-year-old Baloch. He had studied up to year eight at school. His father was a bus driver and he had three brothers and three sisters. He had married in 2007 after paying RS80,000 to the bride's parents. They had no children. In August 2011, he unexpectedly came home late one night and found his bedroom locked. He kicked the door open and when he saw his wife with another man, opened fire on both of them and killed them. Carrying a gun is a normal thing in this society. For these killings he had never been arrested. He believed that his act was in accordance with Islam and *Sharia*. He felt that evil deeds invite disaster and that if he had not killed them he would not have been able to move around in his society honourably. Majid's detailed interview was a success at the end of a hectic day.

The following morning, I began conducting interviews. The first interviewee was Yaseen, a 36-year-old Rind Baloch. He had matriculated in 1996. His father had fifteen acres of land which was being looked after by him at that time. He had three brothers and four sisters. He was married and had one daughter and one son. He cut the throats of one of his cousins (a paternal uncle's daughter) and the suspected boy with a sharp dagger. He admitted that he had had some land-dispute with the murdered boy. After the killing, he ran to Baluchistan. On a *sardar's* instruction, he handed himself in to the police. The *sardar* decided the case in a *faislo* and the murdered boy's relatives changed their statements before the court so Yaseen was freed from the jail. He asked me 'Who can challenge a *sardar's* decision?'

My second interview was with 22-year-old Hayat, a Rind Baloch. His father had died when Hayat was five years old: he had two brothers and three sisters. He started working from his childhood to earn a livelihood for his family. He killed his cousin (a paternal uncle's daughter) and the suspected man. After the killings, he and the brother of the murdered girl went home and informed their elders. Their elders were happy and praised them for repeating the great saga of the Balochi nation. He went to the police with his weapon and faced nine months'

imprisonment. In the meantime, *faislo* was made by the *sardar* and he was freed. He felt that if he had not killed them he would not have been able to move about in the society honourably.

The third participant was Ishtiak, a 26-year-old Baloch from Jacobabad but at the time settled in Sindh. He had studied at secondary school. His father had been a policeman and had then looked after his land. He had six brothers and four sisters. He had killed his sixteen-year-old cousin (a paternal uncle's daughter) in 2007 when she left her home. She had returned and she admitted that she wanted to run away with a boy. She was given some drugs (available easily in the country) in tea. When she became unconscious after taking the tea, her relatives strangled her with her own scarf. He said that that was the correct Balochi punishment for such a crime. The suspected man had escaped and had not been seen since, but Istiak was sure that he would be found sooner or later as the world is not too big to hide him.

After conducting the three interviews with Yaseen, Hayat and Ishtiak, I was exhausted. The killers were very confident and outspoken. They felt no problem about in speaking and admitting the killings into the tape recorder. Before each interview and before gaining their verbal consent for the interview, I explained to them that I was not from any agency, neither NGO nor police. On hearing that, Hayat had said, 'I don't mind if you share my information with the police or anyone else'. Ishtiak offered me his cell-phone number in case I needed to ask him anything else regarding this matter in the future. This attitude was absolutely new and different to me as I had not encountered it or interviewed male killers before.

I asked Mr Nabeel if he could invite others the next day or the day after, as I was not feeling particularly well after speaking and listening to so much about killing, blood and murders. But I was told that a killer had already arrived and was waiting his turn to be interviewed. Disregarding my fatigue, I went to my room, washed my face, had a cup of tea and interviewed Ameer. He was a 38-year-old undergraduate Baloch from Jacobabad but had subsequently settled in Sindh. His father was in a trivial government job. He had three brothers and five sisters. He used to play in the positions of fullback and goalkeeper in the district's hockey team. He had married a cousin, his paternal uncle's daughter, in 1990; they had three sons and one daughter. Before killing his male cousin (who admitted being in an illicit relationship with Ameer's sister) in a town in 1993, he had tried to contact the boy to convince him to marry his sister. When the boy ignored him, he requested the boy's family to

ask the boy to marry his sister. The boy's relatives not only refused this request but also insulted him so, outraged, he killed the boy. He spent seven years in jail but eventually a *sardar* had helped him and he was released from jail. He felt that honour-related issues are not impossible to resolve and that killings are not the only option, but that education is crucial to change the system.

The following day, I took a longer rest. At midday, I received a call to tell me that another killer had arrived. I went and interviewed 29-year-old Tarik. His father worked as a farmer and he had four brothers and two sisters. He was captain of his village's cricket team. After his matriculation, he left his studies due to the family's poverty. He had married his cousin (his paternal uncle's daughter) in 1990 and they had three sons and one daughter. He killed his wife and her boyfriend and went to the police. After the intervention of the *sardar*, the issue was resolved and he was released from jail. He remarried and obtained admission to a school at year nine and continued his studies.

I had now collected seven interviews with male killers. 'It is Jacobabad, the hub of honour killing. There are so many killers who are not afraid of talking about what they have done. You can interview as many as you like', said Mr Nasir. I knew from the local Sindhi newspapers, in which a number of honour killing cases were reported in full detail, that in many of the cases the culprits were not arrested.

My intermediaries had informed me when I arrived in Larkana that they had obtained permission from the jail authorities for me to interview convicted killers in jail. I regarded this as an opportunity to understand whether the killers held inside jails felt or thought differently about honour killing from the killers outside jail. Additionally, my target was to interview thirteen women and thirteen men and I had already interviewed seven male killers so I decided to visit the jails in the hope of being able to interview six killers there.

We prepared to visit the district jail in Jacobabad with the intention of going on to Sukkur after the interviews. It was another extremely hot day. Mid-morning we reached the fifteen-foot high, half-red and half-blue gate of the jail. A small gate was opened for us and the jail superintendent welcomed us. After we had all entered, the gate was locked again. A policeman was sitting on a chair keeping a record of everyone who entered. We were in a rectangular

area between two massive gates about forty feet apart. Four armed policemen were at the second gate, which was heavily locked. In this area there were two offices; one was for the jail superintendent and the other was a meeting room. After we had been given some soft drinks, my husband asked about the interview process. The superintendent told him that the killers had been informed of my intention and many of them wanted to be interviewed. The important thing here was that all the talk about my research and the interviews was between the men and I was left out of the discussion.

Nonetheless, I was provided with a record of the prisoners held for *karo-kari*. The official title of this register was 'Register number one'. About a dozen cases of *karo-kari* were registered. Because I wanted to interview convicted killers and killers still awaiting trial, I studied the profiles and selected seven cases. The selection was based on the final report written by a magistrate, in which the killers had admitted the killings. A policeman was sent to ask if the seven selected prisoners wanted to be interviewed. After half an hour the policeman came back and reported that two of them did not agree but that the other five had agreed to be interviewed. Although this was little discouraging, from the ethical point of view it did provide me with reasonable proof that consent had been freely given by the five prisoners and that none of the seven were under any pressure to cooperate or not. The superintendent, as a courtesy, offered his office to me for conducting the interviews and he, along with my husband and Mr Nabeel went into the other room. The process of conducting the interviews began around 11.30am and ended at about 6.30pm. I interviewed Naseer, Sharif, Ghulam and Fayaz. I could not interview the fifth, Deeno, because when he entered the office where I was waiting, as soon as he saw me, he turned his back on me and left. After a few minutes, the policeman came and told me that Deeno was not prepared to talk to an unveiled woman (although I had covered my head, my face was unveiled). That gesture of Deeno made me realise that religious fundamentalism is taking place particularly in this area of Sindh. All the jail interviewees agreed to the tape recorder as well as the interview.

The first interviewee was Naseer, an uneducated, 65-year-old man. His father had worked as a farmer and he had three brothers and seven sisters. He had married his cousin (his paternal uncle's daughter) about 35 years previously in a marriage exchange and they had three sons and four daughters. He had killed his wife and her boyfriend with a pistol in an inn. In his opinion, an honourable man is supposed to act according to Islamic teaching in such a way as

not to be ashamed on the Day of Judgment. He had handed himself over to the police and had been in jail for four years. He felt sad when he thought of his destroyed family life and his lost business.

My second interviewee, Sharif, was an unmarried sixteen-year-old. He had run away from school in year four after being beaten up by one of his schoolteachers. His father could not work after being paralysed and he had five brothers and three sisters. He used to work at someone's home as a servant. He killed a man after seeing him in an obscene position with his *bhajae*¹⁷¹ who was also a daughter of his paternal uncle. He had tried to kill the woman too but she had escaped because he did not have enough bullets. He believed that he had acted in accordance with Qu'ranic teaching. He was satisfied that he performed his duty honourably. He was a little worried about his parents' wellbeing but otherwise jail seemed fine to him as he liked the food at the jail, but the electricity failures bothered him.

My third interviewee was Ghulam, a 26-year-old, uneducated married man with an impaired limb. His father was also in the jail with him. He had a three-year-old son and an eleven-month-old daughter. His sister was married to his paternal uncle's son but she had died naturally soon after the marriage. His uncle had then asked for money or for another girl from the family to remarry his son on the grounds that the first girl given had died. The issue was not settled and the son of his uncle was killed. Ghulam was accused of the murder but denied the killing and said that his uncles had lodged the FIR¹⁷² against him and his father in order to seize his piece of land. He wept when he spoke of his mother and wife being alone with the two young children.

The final interviewee at this jail was 22-year-old, uneducated Fayaz. He was from Baluchistan but had settled in Sindh. He had four brothers and three sisters and his father was in some trivial government job. His father had two wives. Fayaz had worked as a shepherd in his childhood and had then produced rice from his seven acres of land. He had been married at the age of eighteen to his cousin (his paternal uncle's daughter) with a commitment that he would give his new-born baby girl to the uncle. He had one daughter and two sons and was willing to

¹⁷¹ Brother's wife.

¹⁷² First Information Report.

give the daughter to his father-in-law to fulfil his promise. He denied killing his brother's wife and claimed that she had committed suicide by shooting herself in the head and that his enemies had entered his name in the FIR.

The day looked like a great accomplishment. After these four interviews, I had conducted eleven interviews with male killers and I only needed to have two or three more interviews with men to have reasonably strong data. During the seven hours of the interviews, the electricity was on for only two hours. The office was unbearably hot. I thought about those who had no other option than to bear the harsh weather. The narratives of the interviewees had opened new dimensions of the phenomenon which I was studying. I was beginning to think very differently to what I had thought at the beginning of the research. I was seeing and hearing things from other peoples' viewpoints. My own exposure to the issue showed a diverse picture, full of tears, misery, pain and sorrow. I struggled to pull myself together, then I collected my papers and left the office. My husband and I thanked the staff of the jail and we drove quickly to Sukker.

The next morning, we went to the refuge in Sukkur where the district officer, Mr Shakeel, received us in the absence of the head of the refuge. The matron told me that there were twenty women at the refuge. According to her, 80% of the cases were of domestic violence and 20% of the women had been declared *karis* and had been sent there by various courts. Along with the matron, I went inside the centre and met the women. It was not a large building. There were children with their mothers but they were not in a good condition. Some of them had chicken pox marks on their bodies in that hot weather.

When I explained my purpose and my research project to them, they all willingly agreed to be interviewed; I was satisfied that their willingness was genuine and that they were under no pressure, so there was no ethical issue. The women in the shelters needed to speak about their miseries and troubles in order to be heard by anyone. Simply talking might work as a form of *Catha risis* for them. I asked them to decide when they wanted to be interviewed, but they left the decision to me. I suggested that the mothers of the young children should give them a proper feed before coming for an interview and they told me that they all looked after each other's children.

The first interview which I recorded at the refuge in Sukkur was with 48-year-old, uneducated Noori. She could speak only the Seraiki language. Her father had some fertile land and she had four sisters and three brothers. She was married in exchange for another girl who was given to her brother in marriage. Her husband was a farmer but had then worked as a contractor. They had three daughters and five sons; her thirteen-year-old twin boys were crippled. No child was with her at the *darulaman*. Her husband had allegedly called her *kari* with another man. She was sent to Sukker *darulaman* by the court nine months earlier. No relative so far had come to visit her. She longed for freedom to see her children. She was diabetic and upset and she asked for justice and protection but had no hope of justice.

Eighteen-year-old uneducated Moomal was my second participant at that refuge. Her father had worked as a farmer and she had three sisters and two brothers. When she was twelve, her father had died and her maternal grandfather had sold her mother for RS50,000 at another village. Her mother was accused as *kari* with one of her cousins. When Moomal became thirteen, she was given to a 50-year-old man in marriage. Her husband, a farmer by profession, was a drug addict and a gambler. She had no children. She was the target of physical and mental abuse from her in-laws and eventually her husband and a brother in-law accused her of being *kari*. Consequently, she was sent to the Sukker *darulaman*.

My third interviewee was 21-year-old Tasleem. She was educated and was fluent in Urdu and Seraiki. Her father worked as a gardener and she had four sisters and eight brothers. Hers was a very complex story, she told me. She asked me if her life experiences or events made her *kari* or a criminal. She was not sure whether she had violated any *Sharia* or Islamic law. She was married but her brother had killed her husband. She had her one-year-old son with her in the Sukker *darulaman*. She did not know about her future. She said that she was too simple to understand the world and its politics. She wondered if any court in the world could provide justice in her case.

Twenty-year-old Najia was my final participant there. She was uneducated. Her father had used to work before a stroke left him paralysed. She had five sisters and five brothers. She had been married three years earlier to a paternal cousin and they had no children. Her husband used to torture her physically. He had caught her while she was talking to her boyfriend over a cell phone. Subsequently, she was called *kari* by her husband, brothers and other relatives. She

escaped and eventually reached the refuge. She was determined to divorce her husband and marry someone of her own choice. She asked aggressively why men are so authoritative and why every right is specific only to men. She enquired about the existence of God and showed her hatred of the laws that do not let women choose a life partner.

These cases were very depressing. I was from the same country, province, culture and language but for the first time I felt how advantaged and privileged I was. Simultaneously, I was very disappointed and ashamed that I could not do anything constructive to help these women. Many times my interviewees hugged me and tried to console me as I could not control my tears while listening to their painful accounts. The miseries of their children were unbearable. The accounts of their lives were like burning coals. I understood the depth of T.S. Eliot's observation that 'Human kind cannot bear too much reality'. I knew that crying was no solution for anything but I just could not help crying at hearing the tragedies which people were suffering without any hope of help. I was there for just a few hours and I heard only a few examples of what they had been facing since they were born. I was collecting their stories, they were sharing their lives with me sincerely and in return I had nothing that could bring some hope or a better change in their lives. The feeling of helplessness was overpowering. Feeling very upset, I decided to conduct the other interviews on the following day.

The next day, I reached the shelter early. The head of the refuge was present and I explained my purpose to her. She told me to complete my work as quickly as possible because during Ramadan she went home early as she maintained the fast. I told her that there were only three more cases and that if I started by 11am I would probably be able to finish by 5pm. That day I interviewed Aasiya, Nayab and Anjum.

Aasiya was 23 years old and uneducated. She had two sisters and four brothers. At the age of sixteen she had married Ihsan. The mode of the marriage was *watto-satto*. They had no children. Her in-laws abused her and she had asthma. She admitted her contacts with her boyfriend. Her in-laws and husband wanted to kill her as *kari* so she ran away from home and luckily reached the Sukker *darulaman*. She was determined to divorce her husband and was sure that her boyfriend would marry her. She seemed a happy, joyful and carefree person and laughed at the persistent concept of honour, asking, 'Do men in Sindh know what honour is?'

Nayab was a 22-year-old uneducated woman. She had been eight years old when her woodcutter father died. She completed five classes at a school and learned the Qu'ran from a *molvi*. She had five sisters and five brothers. Seven years earlier, she had married Fareed, her paternal cousin. The mode of the marriage was *watto-satto*; her brother had married the exchanged girl. She had no children. Her brother and the *wadera* of the village blamed her as *kari* but her husband did not accept the charge. She had escaped death and reached the Sukker *darulaman*. She liked living with her husband but she was frightened and said, 'The *wadera* knows that I am beautiful and young and so he will keep selling me off over and over again from one man to another by accusing me as a *kari*'.

The final participant at this shelter was 27-year-old Anjum. She was uneducated but could recite the Qu'ran which had been taught to her by her father-in-law. Her father was a small landowner and had two wives. From both wives he had three daughters and five sons. She had married Ata, a labourer. The mode of the marriage was *watto-satto*. She had four children; two of them were with her at the Sukker *darulaman* and two were with their father. A burglar had broken into their house at night and her husband had assumed that she had some involvement with the burglar and as a result she was accused as *kari*. The police sent her to the *darulaman*. She wept and called her husband 'the most dishonourable pimp who does not understand what honour actually is'.

After conducting these seven interviews in two days at the Sukkur shelter, I had twelve interviews with women who had been threatened with death. Although the supervisor had wanted me to complete the interviews within the time of the fast, she did not intervene in the process. In Pakistan, an overall consensus about the supervisors and caretakers in refuges and shelters is that their approach is not philanthropic for a variety of reasons. In general, the caretakers at these shelters worry about their reputation and journalists and researchers have identified some of their short-coming from the inhabitants of the refuges and published news stories critical of them. However, I did not encounter any trouble in this regard because of the permission documents which I had to visit the shelters. I still intended to see other *darulamans* situated and run in privileged cities such as Karachi and Hyderabad to find some different cases to strengthen my data.

We visited Sukkur jail on the following day. The superintendent explained that meeting with

killers was a highly sensitive issue and that killers were only taken out of their barracks in a critical situation. I was given a register in which I found that eleven men were imprisoned there for honour killings. The superintendent told me that only four had agreed to be interviewed and that they were waiting for me. The officer asked me to try to finish the task as quickly as possible. I realized that it is not every researcher who can have access to such a high-security jail. I was very grateful to my intermediaries that I had been granted permission to visit the jails and conduct interviewees with convicted killers. In this jail, however, the superintendent was reluctant to let me interview without any supervision. He suggested that I could conduct the interviews in his office and that a guard would keep an eye on the interviewee and me from a distance of twelve feet. It was my husband who agreed to this as the whole situation was being discussed with my husband and the intermediary and not with me. I was merely a silent listener and I was quite composed that I was at least provided with an opportunity to conduct the interviews. Mallah, Tufail, Zahid and Anees were interviewed there.

In fact, Mallah and Tufail took the interview process as an opportunity to get out of jail and pleaded with me to help them be granted bail. They denied killing and declared their innocence. Their interviews were quite repetitive: they openly said that they had agreed to the interview as they wanted me to help them to get out of jail. They said that there were hundreds of murderers who had not been jailed so why were they the only ones to be caught? I felt sorry for them. I did not know anything about their cases, but in the jail records they were listed as murderers who had admitted the killings. These interviews could not be regarded as suitable data for the study. What increased my concern were the torn clothes worn by Mallah. The typical Pakistani clothes he was wearing were full of patches and in some places the tears seemed difficult to mend. I was not in a situation to go and buy, or to send my husband to the market to buy, at least a new set of clothes for him. At the end of the interview, when I told my husband about this, he suggested giving his own spare set of clothes to Mallah, which were kept in our car. It took at least 45 minutes for the clothes to reach to me as they had to go through a very thorough security check.

Zahid was an uneducated, 45-year-old man facing life imprisonment on the charge of double murder. His father was a farmer and he had eight brothers and three sisters. He had worked as labourer at different places. He married in exchange and was the father of one daughter and

one son. He denied killing his brother's wife and the other man with her and called it a conspiracy of the *waderas* of his area. He was arrested with his father and after paying a bribe of RS70,000 to the police, they were released, but were subsequently re-arrested. He claimed that he had accepted responsibility for the killings only after enduring third degree torture. He had been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Anees, the second interviewee in this jail, was a 34-year-old man facing life imprisonment. He had six brothers and six sisters. After passing inter, he had passed a test at an Academy Artillery Centre to join the army. During the training, he received news that his wife had been killed. He was arrested as soon as he reached home. He denied killing his wife and said that the *waderas* of his area had taken revenge for an old enmity by accusing him. He was asked by the police to pay a large bribe to be released but he had nothing to pay it. He too claimed that it was third degree torture which had made him confess. He said that the jails are full of innocent men but that criminals and killers go free. It was difficult for me to believe or disbelieve him about confessing under torture. The courts matters are not always admirable though. After these interviews with Zahid and Anees, I had thirteen recorded interviews from killers.

My next stop was the Karachi *darulaman*. It normally takes six to seven hours by road from Sukkur to Karachi so we planned to start our journey early the next morning. That whole struggle of the journey and the interviews had made me very exhausted. In addition, my daughter's health problem was a constant worry for me. My husband contacted the authorities of the Karachi shelter and it came as a surprise to hear from the administrator there that there were no honour-related cases there at the time. Although this was difficult to believe, I had to accept it. My last hope for collecting at least one or two more interviews with women was the Hyderabad *darulaman*, which had once been in the news as the result of the suicide of an occupant. I spoke to the supervisor of the refuge in Hyderabad and explained the purpose of my request to conduct interviews there. She told me that there was only one case of honour killing. She took my cell-phone number and asked me to wait for her call. That evening she told me that the woman was willing to be interviewed. We drove there quickly. Hyderabad is 160 miles from Karachi. The head of the refuge, Shakeela, was a very humble and co-operative woman. In her office there was a long inspiring, poetic manifesto hanging on the wall with a picture of a woman and the title 'Yes Change is Possible'. On a blackboard outside

her office the menus for the whole week were posted. She told us that there were 22 victimized women there, but that only one woman had been sent there with the charge of *kari*. Her name was Perveen. The supervisor told me that she had been waiting for me to interview her.

Perveen was a 27-year-old educated woman. Her father had been a small landowner and she had six sisters and four brothers. After the death of her father, she had been forced to marry her 50-year-old paternal cousin in a *watto-satto* marriage. She had two daughters but they were not with her at the *darulaman*. She had been a constant target of abuse and torture from her husband and her in-laws from the first day of her marriage, and they had threatened her with *talaque*.¹⁷³ Eventually she was accused as *kari* by her husband. She had left home and managed to reach the *darulaman*. She seemed very disturbed and depressed. She wept for her daughters and expressed her concern for their safety.

Conducting Interviews

I had intended to conduct interviews with men and women who were from small towns and were not very educated. Oakley (1981) suggests ‘unmasking’ and then ‘de-centring’ the power balance. Being unmasked was not a big challenge for me because I had categorical empathy with all my interviewees, men as well as women and I was completely dedicated to the cause of letting people know the stories of their plight. However, my status as a researcher pursuing a PhD in a developed country could create a gap between me and my interviewees. To overcome this gap, I carefully explained to the women and men that they had the right to speak freely and to discontinue their participation if they did not feel comfortable, and this policy enabled me to develop in them a kind of trust in me. The assurance that the recorded data would be used for research only and that the precise location of the interview and their identity would never be revealed to anyone had helped me to reassure them that their confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained and to build a confidential atmosphere. Conversely, I knew that before I began explaining their rights, the appearance and facial expressions of an interviewer could generate or destroy a welcoming attitude. In this regard, however, Glucksmann (1994) suggests that it is difficult to erase the power difference because

¹⁷³ Divorce

ultimately the researcher has to interpret and process the data obtained from the interviewees. Even so, in my context, the accomplishment of the interviews mainly depended upon the confidence that the interviewees had in me. I had thought of accumulating some useful strategies to build mutual trust with the interviewees. Smiling is normally a good instrument to initiate talk. Showing empathy and knowing about the plight they were in gave the interviewees confidence in me. Other communication skills also helped to create a normal situation during the interviews, such as expressing interest without interrupting the interviewees whether they were talking about something relevant or irrelevant, asking questions in light and simple words, just like a normal conversation, giving positive gestures and offering a short feedback on interviewees' behaviour. Showing sympathy towards the uneasy and worried interviewees, listening attentively and being polite also eased their anxiety and played a vital role in building an intimate atmosphere.

In Sindhi and Balochi¹⁷⁴ rural culture, women prefer to wear locally-embroidered dresses whereas men choose to wear Sindhi-caps.¹⁷⁵ During the interviews with the women participants, I showed my appreciation of the colour combination of their embroidered dresses and *chaders*. Because I know that they feel proud of their manual skills, this appreciation might have made them a bit happy. If they were with children, commenting on the children's beauty and behaviour also helped me in this regard. Small gifts are always helpful to show care. Additionally, my expertise in my native and local languages and being humble essentially established a rapport.

In addition to a tape recorder, a notebook was in my hand in order to note down any new idea or relevant question which came into my mind while they were talking. The average duration of each interview was under two hours: the shortest interview lasted one hour and eleven minutes and the longest was two hours and 36 minutes. Being very vocal, some women were inclined to talk and had much to say, whereas others spoke very slowly. In the same way, male participants had different styles of talking and explaining. For example, their answers about 'the mode of killing' the alleged *karo* or *kari* were usually quite a few sentences. But see the following answer given by Ishtiaq to that question.

¹⁷⁴ Sindhi and Balochi cultures have their own typical embroidery style.

¹⁷⁵ A Sindi cape or Sindhi *topi* is a hat worn predominantly by Sindhi people of Sindh, however, it has been also adopted by the Baloch and Seraiki people.

Me: Can you explain the mode of killing?

Ishtiak: Yes, sister. We did not kill her with a gun. We gave her some drugs.

Me: Drugs?

I: Yes, sister, drugs.

Me: And how did you do that?

I: We gave her pills.

Me: Pills? Sleeping pills ... or?

I: No, no, sister, drugs, you know, addicts use them as drugs.

Me: Can you name the drug please?

I: 'Ativan' tablets.

Me: Where did you get the tablets from?

I: Oh, they are available everywhere at pharmacies and every general store. Hundreds in Jacobabad are addicted to them.

Me: How did you give them to her and how many?

I: We said take this and she took it. That was understandable, sister, as she was a Baloch child and knew what was going to happen to her. She knew. All Baloch children know our culture, tradition and custom. From their childhood they learn how strong the honour related custom is. She knew, if someone brings dishonour to family, they need to face death so she knew just as well as we all knew the consequences of that act. We all knew what would happen. We simply said to her, 'drink' and she drank.

Me: Was it syrup?

I: No, no, I told you Ativan tablets. We mixed the tablets in tea and she drank the tea.

My object was to let them express themselves fully without intervening. Their continuous talk was irrelevant at times but as soon as they finished I quickly picked up the relevant theme and asked a question. Mason (2002: 67) states that 'A qualitative interviewer has to be ready to make on the spot decisions, [manage] the content and sequence of the interview as it progresses, and to keep everything running smoothly'. The tentative order of my interview questions was changed according to the situation of different interviews and interviewees as sometimes the interviewee carried on to the next point. So the loosely structured order of the questions was also re-arranged to suit the circumstances; however, in order to find the reasons behind the honour killings, the sensitive questions under the theme of 'how violence, honour and collusion are embedded in their lives' were asked in a different sequence. Scully (1994:

15) states that an interview, rather than being uniform, 'could be slightly different, depending on the needs and readiness of the interviewee'. That tactic turned my interviews into sequential conversations and the interviewees did not feel pressurised when questions were asked in connection with the previous reply.

Interviews with the Female Participants

The anger and rage in the eyes, words, voices and tones of the women was unexpected. They were not shy, embarrassed or frightened women but were vocal and very willing to talk loudly about their resentment. Most of them held my tape recorder microphone to record their accounts clearly. Most of them were not educated, but they used English words such as 'friend', 'sim-card', 'mobile phone' and 'tension'. They were obviously under psychological stress but were not reluctant to answer any of my questions. Amazingly, they wanted to be aware of their rights and demanded some kind of restrictions for men. In this context, my experience was similar to Chen's (2003: 7) comment that 'women were more likely to see the interview as an opportunity to explore and reflect on aspects of their experiences they had not thought about before and they emphasized that they wanted to share their stories with other people'.

The women interviewees asked many questions which indicated their awareness of their rights. A young girl was curious about why women had been constructed this way. One of them said, 'How lucky you are to be studying in London.'¹⁷⁶ We have heard that women are treated as human beings there and that even dogs and cats have a better life than us'. An interviewee who was desperate with the present conditions and was speaking against the higher authorities of the Pakistani government including the justice system said, 'I want to be heard by a man but everywhere I see only eunuchs'. For her, 'man' meant a courageous person who would take measures to provide her with justice. It was as if I had observed a new world where suppressed and honour-threatened women needed to redefine the meaning of honour. Gilligan (1982) suggests that 'women had a different voice and a different way of thinking'. These women were conscious of their role in society. One woman stated that 'in this society God is only for men'. During the interviews, many women showed emotional reactions, such

¹⁷⁶ In Pakistani villages, the UK or England is unfamiliar terms. For ordinary people, the UK is 'London'.

as crying, sobbing, and sighing. In these instances, I switched off my tape recorder and waited for them to compose themselves. Enraged, one woman said, 'I am an honourable woman. I need to come out of this so-called jail-type shelter to kill the pimp who claims to be my husband'. Their anger and frustration were reflected through their words and gestures. Astonished, I listened to these women full of anger; in tears and sobbing as they told their harrowing stories, and my anxiety was difficult to endure. I could not control my tears. To see and listen to the stories from the female participants made me believe Harding's (1988) comment that although women have been studied for long time, a study from which women can understand themselves and their social world is virtually unavailable.

I could observe from their faces that they felt relieved after describing the painful moments of their lives. Raising consciousness was not my task, but I felt that having the opportunity to speak before an attentive ear had increased their morale. Talking about their childhood and other life experiences leading to their present situation boosted their self-confidence. The interviews became a kind of catharsis for them. While they were talking to me, they felt hope that their voice was important and that the world outside the boundaries of their existence was concerned about their plight. They raised their points about the so-called honour-related crime and were not concerned at all about their privacy. Rather, they asked me to film their interviews and take the issue to the media. Many of the women indeed expressed their relief after talking, but there was one issue that was raised by all of them which made me really concerned. They asked about the outcome of these interviews. One of them said, 'What will happen by just blackening white papers. You should take our case to some authority to provide us with justice'. They asked for my visiting card, my cell-phone number and some place where we might meet again. I had gone there to collect my research data and they had been very helpful and kind and provided me with whatever I needed. They answered all of my questions. In return, I had nothing equivalent to give them back. I was feeling their pain and had deep sympathy for them too, but whatever contact details I had with me in terms of giving them support were insufficient. I had some links with NGOs and lawyers who might fight their cases for free and help them, but I was helpless before their major concern: 'Where can we go after this refuge as whoever is accused as *kari* will eventually face a terrible death by husband, brother, father or other kin?' They needed security. To me it was a great discomfort that I was unable to direct them towards any betterment. I had some contacts for free medical and legal support but the issue was far deeper and far bigger.

Interviews with the Male Participants

Honour killing is a well-explored topic but the voices of the male killers are absent from the research in which they actively participate. Interviewing male killers about honour killing in the upper Sindh was a strange and different experience. Before I met with the male interviewees, I was concerned about getting them involved in talking about their very sensitive personal experiences that might affect their 'sense of honour' that had led them to kill in the name of honour. Conversely, all the men who I interviewed were extremely confident but very brief on the delicate topics and gave the impression that nothing ever went wrong in their families. Hearn (1996: 29) states that 'Men's generally narrower definitions are partly a product of men's structurally dominant social position and partly consequences of the form of the particular social relationship with the women in question'. My male participants' answers were generalized when they justified the killings in the light of religion and culture. Whatever violence they did or had happened, they had a very strong, stereotypical cultural justification for it.

Although my first interview with a male killer was successful, when I tried to interview the two people who withdrew, denied their words and asked for financial reward, I became a little worried about collecting any worthwhile data from men. My interviewees were of almost the same class group, relatively poor, uneducated and bound within the tribal cultural frame. When I started interviewing the killers, whether convicted or not, to my surprise, they were not at all reluctant to answer any of my questions, no matter how sensitive they were. Arendell (1995: 11) suggests that interviewing men helps to decipher 'the silence surrounding men's subjective experiences and private lives'. My male participants' narratives gave a verbal picture of the complicated social and tribal system. I started with their early life and then moved on to the present, the killing, the victims and the impacts on their and their families' life in the context of honour. Except for the two interviewees who denied the killings, the rest talked contentedly before the tape recorder without any fear. They answered all my questions. They were self-assured that their killings had a strong justification and made it clear that if they were to come across the same circumstances in the future, they would not hesitate to repeat the action.

Honour killing, from one angle, is a display of masculine self, but while I was interviewing these killers, I felt that my urban appearance and the discipline of my study did not irritate them but added respect, except for the one (Deeno in jail) who walked out because my face was not covered. I was indeed treated with great regard. In their culture, the greatest respect they can pay is to call a woman *adi*, *bajee*, *aapa*, *amman* or *ammar*.¹⁷⁷ These were the typical words they used for me, without eye contact. Eye contact with an elder (out of respect), a respected person and a woman is considered rude in Sindhi and Baloch culture. Their overall attitude was very positive.

Chen (2003) states that maintaining a silence and not commenting on what male interviewees have said is crucial in establishing trust before they talk about the details. Silence really played a vital role in my interviews. To appear a good listener was a helpful way to collect good data but it was difficult to remain silent at some of the claims they made about the rights of men over women. Arendell (1995: 11) claims that the interviewer is not a ‘neutral investigator’, and I could not feel myself unbiased but I did not interrupt them while they were talking. During these moments I thought that my silent listening to whatever anti-humanistic/feminist thought was being expressed was regarded as if I agreed with their point of view. I related this with what Chen (2003: 66) calls ‘emotional sympathy’ which allowed me to listen to their narratives and understand a different context. Even if I disapproved of their views profoundly, I tried to remain non-judgemental and endeavoured to see the matter from their point of view. As a researcher, my responsibility was to listen to everything that my participants said. The famous line penned by James Allen that, ‘Man is a slave to his environment’ really helped me to understand the situation.

In the jails, the killers were not so open and forthcoming about discussing their lives and the related tragedies. They were reluctant to accept the responsibility for the killings although they were all convicted killers. However, in a society full of miscarriages of justice and of innocent women falsely accused, as well as corrupt courts which hand out unjust punishments and free obviously guilty men, I could not assume that because these men were convicted, they are therefore guilty. There are many stories that tell that courts wrongly imprison men too. It could be that the men were actually innocent and wrongly convicted.

¹⁷⁷ Sister, elder sister, respected sister, mother, mother.

However, Scully (1994: 9) states that confined men do not trust other people, including their fellow inmates. Of six, three convicted killers in the jails denied the killings. Mallah and Tufail treated the interview as opportunity to get help or support that might enable them to get out of jail. Their interviews were recorded but were not subsequently used as principal data. Their attitude was, however, noted. The situation was similar to that in a report on prison reform in the UK (1990), which indicates that ‘sex offenders may try to conceal from themselves and others the reality of what they have done and the harm it has caused’. Indeed, interviewing killers in jail made me quite uneasy and frightened as I sat between a killer and a guard holding a gun at the distance of 12 feet. Second, the facial expressions of the convicted killers made me realize what gender difference is. Scully (1994: 11) states: Indeed the effect of gender on interviewing is an important methodological question. Perhaps this is because the world of research has been monopolized by men, who, reflective of their dominant status, never considered the possibility that their gender and their politics might be affecting their data.

The Role of Gender Inequality

I collected my data inside jails, in shelters and at different villages in the highly gendered culture of upper Sindh. From the beginning, I understood my position and limitations as a female because I myself belong to the same culture. I was aware that interviewing male killers at various scattered places was not possible for me on my own so I needed co-operation from men (my husband, my two intermediaries and their contacts) in order for me to remain safe while collecting my data. My intermediaries, through their networks, had managed to contact the killers and assure them that the recorded data would not be misused and assured me about the men’s willingness to be interviewed. At Hashmat Khan village, I was the only woman among more than twenty men. I greeted them by saying ‘*Assalam-u-alaikum*’¹⁷⁸ and received the expected reply back from some of them. Visitors shook hands with men but ignored me. The males sat and talked with each other and were indifferent to my presence.

I measured this as a cultural norm of a village in upper Sindh where preference for men over women is deeply embedded but when even the well-educated officers in the jails ignored me

¹⁷⁸ ‘*Assalam-u-alaikum*’ is used as a greeting by Muslims around the world and is considered the equivalent to ‘hello’. It nearly translates as ‘peace be upon you’.

due to my gender, this was a real surprise for me. To me, it seems that, in general, men have created and continue to maintain a system in which women have a very limited role, and a woman's every step is dependent upon men's decisions. To my surprise, at both of the jails, officers, my husband and my intermediaries discussed the purpose of my visit, the subject of my thesis and my data collecting process but I was not asked anything in this regard. They decided in which office the interviews would be conducted. They discussed the approximate duration of each interview. They determined how far an armed man should be from the interviewee and from me. It was all men's talk and men's decisions, because having the body of a woman, I was out of the debate, discussions and decisions. I was disadvantaged by my gender, but I was afraid that if I interfered or spoke out, it might create some hindrances to my data collecting process. Gender inequality seemingly existed wherever I went. Gilligan (1986) argues that these differences extend to the ways that males tend to see themselves as separate from others.

In order to access the refuges, the killers and then, unexpectedly, the jails, at every step, I needed to seek the support of my husband and intermediaries. I was completely dependent on men. However, in this unequal gendered position, I had to turn the situation to my advantage. It was obvious that, being a woman, I probably would not be able to achieve the data collection on my own. In this regard, I was advantaged and benefitted by my contacts and their social status. I realized that in those circumstances, discussing and thinking about women's rights, gender equality and equity was a useless effort. Gender roles are 'socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women' (Anselmi & Law 1998: 195). I knew that in order to talk to the authorities of the jails and shelters, I would need permission from the higher authorities, and this was provided by my intermediaries. Through the net-working of my intermediaries, I also accessed the killers outside jail, who happily talked to me and let me record their accounts, and it might not have been possible for a woman without such strong contacts to hold interviews with women in shelters and men in and out of jail, including a meeting with *sardars*.

The Role of the Intermediaries

I did not realise before collecting this data how instrumental the role of the intermediaries who belong to the same place where the research was to be conducted would be. It is difficult to

avoid cultural and sub-cultural realities, values and traditions. Without having an understanding of the norms and system of a particular culture, it is not easy to become acquainted with the situation. The northern part of Sindh has multiple law and order issues. Killings and kidnappings for ransom are common. As a result of the perpetual tribal, racial and ethnic enmities, the area is virtually in the grip of robbers and criminals. Journalists and researchers are reluctant to go to these areas for reporting. It was almost impossible for me to go alone to these dangerous areas and collect data without the support of the influential intermediaries who not only had a deep understanding of the culture, traditions and the current situation of the particular areas but also had strong connections with the appropriate officers. Furthermore, being local residents of upper Sindh, they had equally strong networking with the local people and with friends who gave them information about the killers in different areas.

From the beginning of my research, I remained in touch with my intermediaries. When I had started my research and had begun to plan the data collection process, their suggestions were always very helpful. In addition, they had been sending me newspaper cuttings about current cases of honour killing published in various Pakistani newspapers. In fact, I had many questions in my mind when I thought of interviewing un-convicted and un-arrested killers, such as: would they speak to me? Why would they admit killing to me? Would they ever talk about the likely benefits of killings? How would they let me record their stories? Also, although I had good access to interviewing rural women, these worries made me surprised that the women in the refuges would speak to me, reveal their identity and let me record their sensitive accounts because for them I would be a stranger. For the jailed killers, I also had multiple reservations in my mind. Above all, obtaining access to the refuges and jails seemed difficult tasks to me. It is a hard task to enter these places without official permission, as there are inevitably many legal obstacles to be overcome. I was fully convinced that in a country such as Pakistan, working as a researcher on these highly complex issues could only be done through connections.

All this might give the impression that these intermediaries were powerful and resourceful men and that therefore they might have influenced the interviewees or the interview process. That was certainly a potential problem, but I did my best to ensure that consent was always freely given. The fact that some killers agreed to be interviewed but others refused, the fact

that some who had consented to be interviewed subsequently changed their mind all convinced me that they were not being pressured in any way. For instance, the one killer in the jail who had agreed to be interviewed, saw me unveiled so went back to his cell and refused to talk to me very clearly made up his own mind about his decisions. Moreover, my intermediaries themselves could not access the women in the shelters directly, nor the men in the jails. Also, the free killers were contacted by their local contacts and my intermediaries did not know most of them personally. I accepted that this networking was comprised entirely of men, but I was aware that I could not have achieved anything without it. I have already explained that some men who admitted killings on the tape recorder were so fearless that a few of them offered me their phone number for any further talk. All of this was only possible because of the influence of my intermediaries and their local contacts: through them, I became able to have access to the jails and shelters, and through them I was convinced that my interviewees were not coerced into speaking to me.

The most important role which my intermediaries played was that they knew the legal process and how to obtain approval from the government-run shelters as well as the jail authorities. Without their well-planned, organized system and understanding of their native land, the whole process would have been a big hurdle for me. Indeed, if I had not received help from them I would not have succeeded in collecting this data. Additionally, arranging medicine for my daughter and food for my husband and myself during the month of Ramadan,¹⁷⁹ frequently changing and finding rooms in hotels and lodges would have really been next to impossible for me if I had not had support of the trusted local intermediaries. Because of them, wherever I went, I found an organized system for conducting the interviews.

Data Processing and Writing up

I was aware that the process of analysis of qualitative data usually has four stages, data organization, theme development, interpretation and report writing. Marshal and Rossman (2006: 156), however, suggest that the ‘data analytic procedure falls into seven phases;

¹⁷⁹ During General Zia-ul-Haq’s regime, to Islamize the country ‘The *Ehteram-e-Ramadan*’ (reverence of Fasting) Ordinance, issued in 1981, provided that complete sanctity be observed during Ramadan – eating, drinking and smoking were banned in public places during fasting hours, According to Section 3 of the Ordinance, a person liable to fast under Islamic principles was not to be found eating, drinking or smoking in ‘a public place’. Section 2 of the Ordinance defined ‘public places’ as follows: hotels, restaurants, rooms, tents, streets, bridges or any other places accessible to the general public. The law is still strictly enforced.

organizing the data, immersion in the data, generating themes, coding the data and interpretation through analytic memos and understanding and writing the report'. Each stage carries its own responsibility, but it was Marshal and Rossman's (2006) second phase, 'immersion in the data' which was the real challenge for me.

The data was collected in about twelve days. However, I could not even work up the courage to transcribe my data immediately after the interviews. The life experiences described in the interviews were not ordinary but were full of pain and sorrows. After listening to these tender narrations, I was emotionally shattered. It took me some time to recompose myself. I saved the recorded data on my computer as an additional back-up to ensure its safety and I kept myself busy doing some playful activities with my family and an old friend while I was staying in Pakistan. It was only when I arrived back in York a month later that I started my data processing and writing up.

As I have explained, I have used pseudonyms throughout in order to preserve the anonymity of the intermediaries and interviewees. To further protect their confidentiality, their villages and relatives were also given pseudonyms. All my interviews were conducted either in Sindhi or Seraiki. In order to keep the originality of the data and to analyse the narratives thoroughly, I transcribed and analysed the data in the original languages. My data collecting process was very hectic. I had listened to every interviewee attentively, so during the actual interviews I could not analyse the underlying meaning of every word. After transcribing the taped interview material, I read the transcripts many times and wrote down ideas in order to classify the contents into research themes. This process was very tiring and time-consuming but going through the relevant material, I realised that I was not the only researcher who found the transcribing and translating phase exhausting (see Darlington & Scott, 2000).

The trauma which I endured while reading and listening to the accounts of both men and women over and over again was far greater than I had faced during the actual interviews. Dickson-Swift *et al.* (2007: 337) suggest that 'transcribing powerful stories can be an emotional experience' for researchers and so were these narratives for me. It was if I had lived and suffered with the unfortunate individuals throughout the terrible periods which they had endured. The respondents' bitter experiences and their sobbing, crying and painful narrations made me depressed. Many times during the transcribing, translating and analysing process, I

gave up the process in the middle and could not stop shedding tears as the characters and their powerful narrations dragged me back into their situation. It became worse when I faced a sleeping disorder and I hated myself for being a privileged member of a society in which human beings suffer such despondency. I suffered from vertigo and asked my doctor for antidepressants. I knew that this approach was not good for my psychological as well as my physical stability; I consciously started thinking rationally and looked upon myself as a person responsible for forwarding to the whole world the messages which had been shared with me with such hope by my interviewees.

I followed the advice of Kelly (1988), who says that ‘meaning in the spoken word is often conveyed through gesture, tone of voice and emotional expression’. To be an accountable researcher, during the transcription process I did not ignore a single detail of emotion, such as facial expression, cultural gesture, sign language, smile or pause during the interviews (because I had carefully noted all these down in my notebook) in order to interpret the data to its fullest. However, for the purpose of clarity a few irrelevant passages were edited.

Instead of translating just selected quotations, I translated each complete interview into English because most of the material was related to the four main themes (*see* Tables 1 and 2) and I could not take the risk of leaving aside a single relevant sentence. I went through each interview comprehensively, I identified the spoken material which I required and then cut the selected extracts to relocate and paste them under the main themes and subtopics. On-screen, this process is quicker and more effective than doing it by hand. I also had to go through the remaining data many times to check that nothing relevant had been overlooked and this was how I utilized the potential material for my sub-themes generated during my data analysis process. I assume that a researcher’s mind starts to analyse the data while listening to and recording it, but for me transcribing and translating the data was another preliminary stage of analysis.

Interpreting the information in interviewees’ data is another very significant element during research (Kvale, 1996). The accounts were predominantly in my mother tongue Sindhi, in which I was completely able to gain a good understanding of their narratives. For my own benefit, I carefully translated the interviews into English. To gain ‘conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning’ (Birbili, 2000), I not only avoided formal language but also, in

order to retain the originality and linguistic diversity of the accounts, I did not change some local words but wrote substitute words in footnotes. However, despite my thoughtful efforts to preserve ‘their own distinctive ways of speaking’ (Standing, 1998: 191), I could not become as successful as I wanted to be largely due to the fact that the Sindhi and English languages have completely different dialectal and cultural approaches.

Vulliamy (1990: 166) states that the translator’s emotional involvement could also influence the outcome. I was determined to be absolutely neutral in the process of translating data and not to add or omit words in order to strengthen or lessen the impact of the data. I did my best not to impose my emotional or rational views into the original accounts but remained as detached and professional as possible. There were many instances when I struggled to remain unbiased. For instance, when my male interviewees had commented on their superiority over women to justify the killings and viewed honour killing as above the law, remaining neutral was difficult. Conversely, I tried my best to find the exact translation to convey what they wanted to say. The women participants, being irritated, used slang and very colloquial language (Sindhi and Seraiki), and I struggled to find the most suitable meaning for the words which they had used and did not add any extra words to increase or reduce the intensity. Overall I used a word-by-word translation technique which I found to be the best method for translating all the subtle terms, proverbs and idioms. Interestingly, many of the Sindhi words do have equivalent English terms. For example, some women used the word ‘*bharwo*’ to show their hatred for their husbands and the English ‘pimp’ turns out to produce the same effect. These thoughtful methods helped me to maintain the original meaning of the narrations and also retain the cultural characteristics of the data.

Following Millen’s (1997) suggestion, I had to forget my identity as a feminist researcher while listening to my interviewees, both men and women, talking. Being aware of the discussion about reflection and reflexivity in the feminist research field, my agreement or disagreement with what they said was of least importance; my participants had complete liberty to express themselves. I did not confront their ideas and values about honour, the opposite sex, the world, women’s liberty and freedom, but set out simply to be a good listener. Silverman (2001: 3) states that ‘descriptions are never simple reports on ‘events’ but are structured to depict ourselves as particular kind of people who are usually ‘responsible’ and ‘cautious’’. During the data analysis, I tried to be responsible and conscious in the way that I

interpreted and examined the data critically with the intention of doing justice to their narrations. Although I tried to detach my personal feelings from it, Cotterill and Letherby (1993) confirm that it is inevitable that a researcher will interpret data in accordance with her or his own understanding. Since I was the person who was analysing the tales which I had heard, I could not cut myself out of it.

For the transcription of the taped interviews, I adopted strategies on the basis of my previously written interviews for an Urdu newspaper and of Kelly's (1988) statement that, 'In order to retain some of the meaning that is lost in transcription, I developed a method of coding tone of voice and emotional expression'. I followed Kelly, and in my transcripts 'I' represents me and 'A' represented the interviewee's answers (although for clarity of presentation, I used a different method earlier in this chapter). Two exclamation marks showed the interviewee's surprise. Three dots ... represented a pause and five dots a longer pause. Dashes ----- showed that a sentence had been left incomplete. *Italics* indicated a particular local word that is complicated to translate or has more than one meaning.

I did not use any software to analyse my data. Initially, I gave careful thought to using an appropriate software programme/package which could provide me with the means of coding the data so I explored some of the available programmes to assess their suitability. There has been a debate on the usefulness of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis since the 1990s. Some researchers favour the technique, but many have expressed their concern that the software may 'guide' researchers in a particular direction and encourage quantitative analysis of qualitative data (Seidel, 1991). The reliance on the 'nonhuman technologies' such as CAQDAS, makes the research data 'analogous to statistical packages used in the processing of quantitative data' (Bryman & Beardsworth, 2006: 10) and could serve to distance the researcher from the data and create homogeneity in methods across the social sciences (Barry, 1998). Frost (2008: 32) argues that when the qualitative data is dealt by CAQDAS 'the results of the coding were somewhat disembodied, such that the subjectivity of the researcher and research subjects were somewhat overlooked.' Another criticism of the role of CAQDAS is that it encourages data fragmentation: it has been likened to 'dissection' (Dey (1993: 64) and argued that it can produce 'too many distinctions' that can lead to unnecessary fragmentation and loss of focus' (Miles & Huberman 1984: 222).

The sensitive nature of my data and the need for me to be aware of subtleties in the statements given by the respondents led me to decide to analyse the data by hand without software because relying on software might result in some information being overlooked or lost due to data fragmentation. My top priority was to ensure that every nuance of the data was taken into consideration. I had recorded in my notebook all the details of facial expressions, cultural gestures, sign language, smiles, crying, sobbing and pauses during the interviews in order to be able fully to grasp the meaning of their spoken words.

Because I had acquired the data personally, often under circumstances of high emotion and even personal potential danger, I felt that it was important for me to carry out a close analysis of each individual's story. I had transcribed written texts, field notes, supporting documents, recordings of interviews. A researcher's positionality or viewpoint is part of transcription. Since I belong to the province where I conducted the research so somehow my set of social, economic, personal, and other characteristics impact on the way I represent my data. However, I kept on working to understand my biases and standpoint while focusing on the data.

My analysis goals were to search for commonalities, which led to categories and codes (and possible headings and sub-headings for the chapters) and to search for contrasts/comparisons through repeatedly listening, reading, and thinking critically. I preferred thematic analysis (TA), which is widely used in social research, because of its theoretically flexible approach. It is a cluster of methods that focus on identifying patterned meaning across a dataset that provide answers to the research questions being addressed. Patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarization (reading and re-reading the data to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content), data coding, and theme development (Braun & Clarke: 2008). The ways to approach TA vary but I followed a semantic approach— coding and theme development that reflect the explicit content of the data.

For coding, I generated labels that identified important features of the data that were relevant to answering the research questions. This involved coding the entire dataset, and after that, I collated all the codes and all relevant data extracts together for later stages of analysis. First, I made 26 files with the names (pseudonyms) of each single participant. My guideline was the four main themes that were the bases of interview guide. During the translation of the data, I highlighted in red the required sections which were discussing the main themes, such as life

before and after marriage, and how violence, honour and collusion were embedded in their lives. In addition, new and unexpected aspects of participants' accounts were also identified and coded taking account of their relationship to my original research questions.

Then I cut the selected coloured paragraphs from each respondent's account and pasted them separately into individual files for each one. That helped me to deal in a concise way with material regarding every individual and to think about the main sections and subsections of each analysis chapter. I knew that the essence of the data would revolve around these themes and I therefore devised a strategy to identify themes and retrieve applicable data from the narratives. Then, I examined the codes and collated data to identify significant potential topics and sub-topics for the analysis chapters. This involved collating data relevant to each candidate theme, in order to work with the data and review the viability of each theme to determine whether it told a convincing story of the data. At this point, by developing a detailed analysis of each theme, I combined, discarded, defined and renamed topics and sub-topics.

I started to divide the red material using different colours. In order to record which colour was given to what topic, I wrote on a sheet of paper the headings and sub-headings of the chapters with the names of each of the colours which I intended to give them. I then worked on the separate files of every participant and gave different colours to the different topics and sub-topics. For example, the responses of the participants about the subtopic 'games' were coloured blue in every file, and similarly every topic was given a different colour. After the data organization and theme development, my next tasks were interpreting this data further to and continuing to deepen the analysis.

Because I had decided to use the manual method described above, I had to devise my own technique for coding and analysing the data. I checked the remaining data many times and when I was satisfied that nothing relevant had been overlooked¹⁸⁰, I started to focus on the selected potential material for my data analysis chapters. While I was interpreting and examining the data, I was very conscious of the need to remain neutral to do maximum justice to their narrations without being prejudiced. But I was the person who was analysing tales

¹⁸⁰ I left out a few important but irrelevant things, for example, during the interviews with the women participants, I showed my appreciation of the colour combination of their embroidered dresses and *chaders* in order to create rapport. Commenting on the children's beauty and behaviour also helped me in this regard.

which had a deep impact on me; I could not cut myself out of the process entirely but I could try to remain as unbiased as possible. My strength was my comprehensive understanding of the culture and traditions of Upper Sindh and my command of their languages, so I was able to interpret the data in accordance with this understanding. At this last stage, I moved from the themes to the chapters. To divide the themes, topics and sub topics into three analytical chapters, with an obvious purpose to incorporate every important piece of the precious data, I carefully chose the headings and sub-headings for the chapters in order to explore fully the stories of women (those threatened with death) and men (killers) in order to allow both sets of voices to be heard. In the Fourth chapter, I incorporated the versions of both genders, under the title of 'Violence in Everyday Life'. The last two chapters speak of the stories of men and women separately and cover almost all the discussed aspects of their lives. The reason for the Fourth chapter on childhood is that when I listened to men's and women's stories I realised that their childhood experiences had had an immense effect on them in terms of acculturating them to violence so that they saw it as a routine part of life. I felt that these experiences, combined with the poverty and deprivation of their childhoods were important in explaining the context in which violence against women occurred. In chapter Five and Six, I decided to tell the men's and women's stories separately for two reasons. First, I wanted to ensure that both sets of stories were heard. Secondly, because they were describing rather different situations surrounding violence it would have been difficult to set them side-by-side in comparative chapters.

Conclusion

Although I successfully amassed a wonderful set of data with the help of my intermediaries and their networks, the process of reaching that success had initially seemed very perplexing, such as interviewing killers, listening to the accounts of killers who had evaded justice and meeting women who had been threatened with death, and the constant difficulties which I had encountered made the process very exhausting.

The initial disappointment when male interviewees denied their accounts almost at the end of the interview and demanded some compensation for being interviewed was not the only problem I encountered. Other issues, such as gender inequality, emotional management, the stress I felt after hearing a narration, the extreme weather and my daughter's health problem

all presented challenges for me. However, from this experience, I not only learned a great deal about my role as a researcher and the skills to conduct successful interviews, but also gained a deep understanding of all my interviewees within their cultural background. I was touched by the painful life stories of the women, their strong fighting spirit, their struggles to stay alive, their courage in telling the truth to the world and, at the same time, I came to a full realisation of the deeply embedded patriarchal influences on the lives of these women. On the other hand, the narrations of the sentenced prisoners and the free killers, who admitted the killings as a high and noble achievement and were fully convinced that the killings were religiously and culturally justified, helped me to understand their perceptions of abuse, their sense of pride at killing to support a form of patriarchal beliefs and masculinity. In the following chapters, I shall present a picture of my participants' lifetime experiences in three parts: violence in everyday life, men's stories of violence and women's stories of violence.

Chapter Four: Violence in Everyday Life

Introduction

As I have established in the previous chapters, the high incidence of honour killings in upper Sindh is heavily influenced by Baloch tribal culture. As I discussed in Chapter Two the evidence shows that killing on the pretext of honour was a tribal tradition that was brought into Sindh by the Baloch invaders, whose rule was ended by the British in 1843 (Kakepoto, 2005; Khokhar, 2002). Documentary evidence shows that strict laws were made by the British to curb the practice. The strict implementation of those laws remained effective until new ordinances were introduced to replace parts of the secular, British-era, Pakistan Penal Code with the purpose of bringing Pakistani law into conformity with *Sharia* law. The new laws were the *Hudood Ordinance* (1979) and the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinances* (1990), which provided immunity to killers who kill under the pretext of law. The change in the Pakistani legal system actually revived the previously curbed tradition of honour killing. After the implementation of these ordinances, in the 1990s most cases of honour killing were heard of in the province of Balochistan. Since Balochistan was a place of constant insurgency, Balochi people had migrated towards the nearest province, which was Sindh. They set up businesses there and bought houses in the cities and villages, which were along the border with Balochistan. Those cities of Sindh where the Balochi settled are the centres of honour killing.

Honour killing does not happen out of nowhere, a specific environment and the particular social circumstances of a highly patriarchal culture provoke it. On the basis of my data, I shall analyse what kinds of attitude contribute to the established culture of violence in upper Sindh. In this chapter, I shall explore my research data which demonstrates how honour killings occur in a context in which violence is endemic in every phase of life. In this warrior culture which is isolated from the rest of the world through lack of access to education and modern technology, honour-related violence is exacerbated by poverty and harsh circumstances. My aim in this chapter is to investigate the inflexible cultural and socio-economic conditions that promote violence and to suggest the ways in which the present system supports a form of masculinity that keeps women powerless, immobile and victimised.

In upper Sindh, there is a range of physical violence and mental abuse, including kicking and hitting, in domestic and public life, and these are common conduct. The inhabitants of this region are acquainted with such aggressive behaviour from their childhood through to their marriage and afterwards. In this chapter, I shall examine the dominance of men in all walks of life from public culture to the domestic sphere. I shall also explore specific categories of violence by men, such as ‘coercive sex with wives, denial of the required necessities of life’ (Khan, 2006: 57), and ‘surveillance, threats of divorce, denial of marriage consent and inheritance’ (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999: 195); it then considers how these pave the way for the extreme violence of honour killing. Thus, it can be argued that in upper Sindh’s distinctive gender structure, the domination of male violence is endemic and, as I shall discuss below, the social, tribal and economic conditions in a male-dominated society all contribute to the prevalence of violence.

This chapter focuses on how violence is integrated into the lives of the residents of upper Sindh as portrayed by my respondents. This analytical approach will help to explore the hierarchies of masculinity in the specific environment where honour-related crimes and oppression take place. I shall also examine the range of control strategies exercised over women which subject them to oppression and exclusion from their childhood and throughout their lives. The status of women, indeed, the very question of their existence, and gender differences in the upbringing of boys and girls are also explored. Following this, the various modes of marriage and their implications are discussed in order to understand women’s marital standing and to contextualize men’s reasons for honour killing, which will be examined in Chapter Five.

Invisible Women

Sindh and Baluchistan have been centres of serious ethnic conflict for a couple of decades. Because of the concomitant anarchy, Baloch tribes have been migrating to those districts of Sindh which are on the border with Baluchistan, such as Larkana and Jacobabad. (Ahmed, 1993; Bhanbhro *et al.*, 2013; Hoodbai, 2002). However, ‘[c]ultural attributes like distinctive beliefs, institutions, practices, religion and language often form the basis of identity’ (Regmi, 2003: 1) and thus their similar cultural identities help Sindhi and Balochi to embrace each other’s culture (Khokhar, 2002). Both Sindhi and Balochi inhabitants of upper Sindh are very

proud of their ethnic and clan identification and are not happy to adapt to the national Pakistani culture and language which in their opinion is imposed on them and is a threat to their centuries-old traditions and languages (Bhatti *et al.*, 2012). From this viewpoint, both ethnic groups are in conflict with the central state (Pakistan) and that often results in violent clashes.¹⁸¹ However, in all these violent clashes and struggles for identity, greater autonomy and ethnic pride, the woman is unseen. She has no place and no significant role to play in this society. This part of the world is absolutely a man's world. My overwhelming impression of life in upper Sindh was that of the tremendous gap between men and women. The social tribal system supports men who, through their aggression and violent attitudes, continue their dominance over women. In this strongly patriarchal society, the role of women is solely one of domestic duties, reproduction and the rearing of offspring.

Every Pakistani citizen is supposed to have a national identity card from the age of eighteen but none of my women participants had an identity card. In other words, they had no official evidence of their lives. For example, Najia (20) told me at the Sukkur *darulaman*: 'I cannot tell you my exact age. My identity card has not been made so I am not sure what my age is'. Here the question arises: What legal proof is there of their existence? Their births are not registered, neither is their presence in the world. In these tribal areas, women are born and die without leaving any official marks of their existence, as they have neither birth certificates nor identity cards. According to ethnic convention, men do not think it necessary to have identity cards for female members of their family, and it is almost impossible for women to go to the relevant office and undergo the process of having an identity card issued. Even when women do have identity cards, they cannot use them as they have no jobs and nothing to do with the world outside their houses; moreover, the cards remain in the custody of a husband, father or brother. Writing about Pakistani women, Ferdoos (2010: 9) comments: 'Most women have never been alone in a bank, a government office or even a bookshop or hospital'.

However, the women whom I met showed no concern regarding not having identity cards. Noori (48) said that, 'we forest dwellers do not keep records of these unimportant things'. For

¹⁸¹ The violent ethnic conflict in Baluchistan and Sindh has taken thousands of lives. The Balochi rebels have been demanding greater regional autonomy or even independence. Additionally, Sindh has also been the centre of serious ethnic conflicts where the two major ethnic groups Sindhi (the indigenous people of Sindh) and Muhajirs (the people who migrated from India to Sindh at the time of the Partition in 1947) struggle for hegemony and territories (Ahmed, 1993).

most of my participants, their birth and life were insignificant and thus not having an identity card was an equally inconsequential matter for them. In contrast, men are usually issued with an identity card when they reach eighteen years of age. Men utilize their cards to find a job, to get married, to divorce, and in courts (in tribal culture, to file a case against someone on minor issues is almost a routine matter).

Men, on the other hand are present everywhere; in front of their house, in streets and bazaars, public parks, at work places, in the markets, the office and shops. Women, particularly younger ones, are rarely seen at these places. If present, clad in a *burqa*, a *chader* or a *dupatta* and their heads bowed and eyes cast down to the ground, they walk quickly through the streets while everybody's eyes follow them. (Ferdoos, 2010: 7)

The status of the women whom I interviewed is similar to that of women in Iran described by Tabari and Yeganeh (1982: 236): 'A woman has to obtain permission from her male kin to work, to travel, to study and to change her place'. In other words, women are the property of men and their lives and deaths are controlled by men. For example, one male participant, Ishtiak (26), told me how, with the help of other male members of his family, he had strangled his fifteen-year-old female cousin with a *dupatta* because she was, in his opinion, a *kari*. When I asked whether the police or *wadera* were involved after he killed the girl, Ishtiak looked into my eyes and replied:

No, no, why would I go to the police? We killed our own child. She was ours. We did what we wanted and what she deserved. We had a right to do whatever we did. Who could report to the police against us? Who was her relative? We killed her because we were responsible for her conduct. Why would people or police interfere in our personal family matter? (Ishtiak, 26)

This girl was born, lived for some time, and was killed without leaving any mark of her existence. I could feel the strong sense of ownership in his words, 'our own child'. Other men also used phrases such as 'our women', 'our girl' in ways that showed men's absolute right over women. Women who have no official existence live at the mercy of their men, who can kill them whenever they want. It seemed strange to upper Sindh's tribal men that anyone would question them over killing 'their own girls'. Men are the supporters and controllers of their families and therefore have a right to take the lives of 'their women' if they disobey the men or violate traditional boundaries. Consequently, in this highly gendered society, women's position is as subjugated subjects. As this patriarchal culture regards men as the only

breadwinners, keeping their families and especially women in economic dependence maintains male dominance. Khan states that,

Economic dependence of women and male control over their lives and sexuality has created a particular kind of culture, tradition, practice, custom, norms and taboos that have determined the inferior status, role and fate of women within the social culture. (Khan, 2006: 211)

Men's efforts towards earning and supporting their families are appreciated by not only their families but also by the community in general. However, the contributions of women in terms of household work, home chores, looking after the cattle and working in the fields are not valued. Poya (1999: 113) observes that men and children depend on women to do this work for them and benefit from it' but the economic value of women's activities in the productive sphere is not recognized. 'Since men are responsible for the economic needs of their women and children, women are pushed to remain in a reproductive sphere depending absolutely upon the whim of their men which in turn results in their dependent status' (Ferdoos, 2010: 31).

The women work hard and directly contribute to supporting their families. They make quilts and Sindhi caps and embroider clothes to sell but their labour is not considered equivalent to men's work. Moreover, they are integrated into the workforce in a different way from men. First, they are paid by intermediaries who buy things from them and sell the products of their labour in the market at a much higher price. In the majority of cases, women's home-made products are sold to the intermediaries by their husbands or brothers who often do not give the money to the women. The women have no social or legal means of protection from this economic exploitation. They are easy to exploit and are aware of the possibly dangerous consequences of trying to sell their handicrafts themselves.

None of the male participants in my study appreciated or even acknowledged the labour and efforts of their mothers or any other female members of their families. Rather, some of them proudly told me that, in their culture, women do not work but only look after children and prepare food. By keeping women officially unrecognized, economically dependent and concealed, these traditions help to maintain men's authority over them. Yet Fatima (55), whose peasant father had died when she was only seven, told me: 'My mother was a very

hardworking woman. She used to make quilts and Sindhi caps. She made shirts with embroidery to sell in order to feed us. My mother never took rest’.

However, men’s strong concept of ownership over women and the economic dependency of women are not the only reasons for women’s invisibility. Khan (1972: 218-219) suggests that the local Islamic practices of segregation affect society and women particularly, and pave the way for socio-cultural attitudes that favour men and hold back women. The segregation and veiling are a part of girls’ socialization into society. From then on, the traditional norms and values, compounded by the rapidly growing religious extremism, mean that whatever is said against women in the name of Islam or the Qur’an becomes a convention. Ferdoos (2010: 6) clarifies this: ‘pseudo-fundamentalists converted the teaching of Islam to read in the best interest of men and [to be] highly unjust towards women’. In my observations, such (so called) Islamic practices are so deeply entrenched in the tribal culture of upper Sindh that women in this society have no official existence. Women are made to understand their limited role and the strict social, religious and cultural taboos that restrict them from their childhood onwards. They live within the four walls of the house boundaries and if they violate the prohibitions, they are dealt with accordingly. In fact, the stigmatized situation can be understood through the conditions in which the people of upper Sindh live. Poverty, lack of education, gender discrimination, endemic violence and lack of access to the advancements in the rest of the world are some factors that have bound people’s lives within this patriarchal system. The system has limited work options and the work culture is also not violence-free.

A Childhood of Poverty and Violence

Most of the fathers among my participants worked as *hari*.¹⁸² The peasant class in Pakistan usually lives below the poverty line and bonded labour still exists. A peasant’s entire family (including women and children) is expected to provide labour for the owner of the land on which they live. Women rise early in the morning to finish household chores and then work in the fields (if required). Children are expected to undertake chores around the farm such as grazing animals and collecting water and firewood. When required, women also undertake work in the landowner’s household. Moreover, the *wadera* and his family are known to abuse

¹⁸² Peasants.

their power: ‘The notion that the [*wadera*] and their sons sexually abuse the women of tenant families is common and such abuse is often exacerbated by violence or its threat’ (Maliha *et al.*, 2004: 28).¹⁸³ There is a fairly recent trend in upper Sindh for the local people to prefer labouring for daily wages rather than working as *hari* under the oppressive control of *waderas*. Pakistan has a minimum wage but uneducated people are unaware of this so violation of the law is common and employers fix monthly, weekly and daily payments as low as they can. Thus, this form of work is also not well paid. Therefore, the living standards and circumstances of those who work for daily wages and the lives of those with a peasant background are not very different.

Consequently, poverty is a common feature of my participants’ lives. The incidence of poverty in Pakistan is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, respectively 38.7% and 22.4%, and earnings are lower and poverty rates are higher in rural areas of Sindh (Toor & Perveen, 2009). Moreover, poverty increased sharply during the decade between 2000 and 2009 (Lohano, 2009). The reasons for this are varied. Bhatti *et al.* (2012) show that the lack of availability of water and resources, frequent natural disasters such as floods and rain, and other uncertainties have been reducing the earning potential of poor families. Cattle keeping can be profitable but even animals are not safe from the effects of bad weather or natural calamities. Moreover, most businesses have moved from upper Sindh mainly because of the problems of the violent tribal conflicts mentioned above (Lohano, 2009; Yousuf & Hasan, 2015). Thus, the violence exacerbates the poverty.

According to their own descriptions, the participants’ houses are overcrowded and have no facilities such as water and sanitation. Ferdoos (2010: 9) describes the typical domestic set up as follows: ‘The [family] system consists of the husband’s parents, his brothers and their families and the husband’s unmarried sisters’. All of the participants lived in such extended families and had numerous children, many had more than ten siblings and most lived in mud houses. Safiruddin (2005: 29-30) explains that mud, rice straw and wooden logs constitute the main materials for the construction of the mud houses. Having more male children is a matter

¹⁸³ Official and political circles have been reluctant to accept the fact that bonded labour exists in the agriculture sector in Sindh and Baluchistan. However, after decades of harsh treatment of the peasants, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan’s 1998, 1999 and 2000 reported the most concrete evidence of bondage in the agriculture sector in Sindh, where a number of the cases of sexual abuse are discussed (Maliha *et al.*, 2004).

of pride whilst having a number of girls is a source of shame; this is in part because having more male children is considered to mean more productive assistance. The form of the large and extended family system compounds this by fostering men's solidarity: men are insiders and women are outsiders as men live in the same family from their birth but women marry into them. In the patriarchal hierarchy, while senior men have power over junior men, the women come at the bottom. This is the way the family structure works.

The children of this region grow up in a very narrow, violent and grindingly poor society. The participants whose fathers worked as peasants held resentment regarding their childhood. Zahid (45), the brother of eleven siblings, said: 'You know the life of a poor peasant in our country. My father always wished to provide proper food for his children but he could not. We were very poor and still are. We have nothing, no land, no property and no home'. Their work responsibilities grew with their age as told by Shahadat (30) in her interview: 'We were thirteen brothers and sisters. I started to work at home from the very beginning. My jobs were preparing food, washing dishes and clothes. In addition, I collected the dung of animals and carried out whatever work was given to me by my parents. This was my life'. The narratives of the participants whose breadwinners worked as waged daily labourers were not very different from those who had a peasant background. Hayat expressed his discontent about his childhood:

Poverty was at an extreme level. My father died when I was a young child. I grew up in very tough circumstances. I had two brothers and three sisters and one mother to support. I started toiling from the age of five and six to earn a livelihood as a labourer to look after my family. The toiling ... I started at the age of five ... is continuing still. No relief, no rest, no peace, life is like that. (Hayat, 22)

In the narrations of the participants, the extreme levels of poverty and hopelessness were obvious. They talked about the aggression they had faced during their childhood. Women and children often become easy objects of anger. However, in some cases, children suffer more as they face corporal punishment from both parents. A report for *South Asia Regional Consultation* (2005) notes that in domestic houses and institutions in upper Sindh, corporal punishment and physical abuse is administered in a context of punishment. Whipping is a common form of punishment ordered by traditional village mediation. Hitting and slapping children and using abusive language to children are not condemned and if this is avoided it is

considered as spoiling children. The violence towards children can be seen as a part of the tribal training to make male children hard and strong in order to survive in the tribal culture and to make girls submissive, fearful and compliant. Since such abuse is common, only some of the participants spoke about it. Tasleem's (21) father worked as a gardener. She was brought up with twelve siblings, four sisters and eight brothers. She described her childhood in these words, 'My childhood was very painful. I do not want to recall anything of my childhood. I used to be beaten by my parents and elder brothers. I was an object for physical and mental abuse at their hands'. Violence also occurs among siblings. Najia (20), a woman who grew up with ten siblings, told me:

My childhood was all pain. We had almost nothing to live on or eat properly. We used to fight all the time. We shouted at each other. I remember we pulled each other's hair hard and hit. My father was a poor worker and mother was unable to earn anything so our childhood was just a mess. Our parents also beat us but the verbal abuse was too much. I really hate my home and my family system. (Najia, 20)

Some of the participants' sufferings were increased because of their drug-addicted fathers. There is a high percentage of people in the rural areas of Sindh who are drug addicts. Different kinds of drug are available in the markets.¹⁸⁴ A number of my female participants including Moomal suffered miserably because the male members of their families were either drug-addicted or were in debt because of their addiction. Fathers, grandfathers and husbands mistreated, tortured, accused and sold their kinswomen for money, for paying off their debts, perhaps sometimes on the spur of the moment. Moomal (18) had three sisters and two brothers. She described her childhood as very hard:

I have been facing disasters and trouble since my childhood. My father was addicted to drugs. He was also a gambler. In his fits of drugs, or due to some other matter, he accused my mother as *kari* with one of her cousins. My father beat my mother and threatened to kill her. (Moomal, 18)

Nazia (26) said in her interview: 'I had a good life at my parents' home until my father started gambling and became addicted to drugs. After selling his land and home, he sold my two elder sisters for money to pay off his loan'. Shabana (18) was the only female participant who had

¹⁸⁴ The military dictator Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) played a major role in the Afghan war against the Soviets, aided by the US. As a result, Afghan refugees who came to Pakistan in the name of the Muslim brotherhood brought drugs such as opium and *heroin* to Pakistan.

only one brother and one sister. She said unemotionally: ‘My father had passed away before my birth. My mother was sold (married to another tribe for money) by her paternal grandparents’.¹⁸⁵

Naheed (25) repeatedly referred to how, in a fit of fury, her father had hit her mother and threatened to kill her as *kari*. Her mother then took her children and went to her own father’s home. Later when Naheed’s father realized what had happened, he asked her grandfather to return his wife back to him.

But then my grandfather refused to give him his wife or children back and instead sold my mother for RS50,000 to some other village. I was just twelve years old at that time. My brother, my sisters and I cried and begged our grandfather and uncles not to sell our mother but they did not listen to us and locked us in a room. My mother cried loudly and told my grandfather that she would work for him as a slave if he would let her live with her dream. The week after that, my father died of a heart attack. (Naheed, 25)

She continued sadly:

My maternal relatives are very cruel. They listened neither to us nor to our mother and she was sold. My younger brothers were six and seven years old at that time. They were weeping and not letting go of my mother but my uncles forcibly snatched them away from my mother and the three of us lived and grew up without our mother at my uncles’ home. (Naheed, 25)

Anjum (27) shared a vivid memory of her childhood that shows how the word ‘honour’ and the phrase ‘honourable behaviour’ are treated in this culture. ‘My father was a very honourable and strict man. He killed my elder sister when she was only thirteen because she sat with her male cousin on the same bed. The cousin was only twelve years old at that time’. In the hierarchy of this tribal honour, women’s role is restricted to being a ‘shame bringer’ who needs to be killed to save the honour of men.

The women I interviewed were aware of the devastating impact that honour had on them. Talking about their childhood was a strange, somehow difficult and different process for them, yet their ability to narrate their life experiences was impressive. They were not educated but

¹⁸⁵ When women are accused as *karis* by their husbands and go to their parents’ home for shelter, they risk being sold to a faraway village by their parents in order to avoid the shame of harbouring a *kari*.

the experiences of life made them mature enough to describe things clearly and objectively. The process of interviews seemed like a catharsis for them. While talking about their past, they thought carefully and began hesitantly; however, when they started recalling their childhood, they recollected many things that sometimes made them smile and sometimes sad and emotional. During those times, they forgot their present situation. Quite a few participants, the men and the women, described their past without emotion, as if it was a wasted and useless time for them. Ishtiak (26) showed his surprise over the question of how he grew up. He replied, 'I grew up like other villagers' children. Just roaming, fighting, learning and cracking jokes. You know the common life in Jacobabad. Children just kill time in order to grow up and do some work ... to live on ... that's it'.

Significant gender differences are also evident in children's time spent outside the domestic boundaries. The boys often pass their time outdoors in public spaces. I observed that there were no parks, gardens, playgrounds or any other activities for children. Barefoot young boys wearing torn clothes were wandering about in scorching heat. The boys' ages were between five and fourteen years. No girl was seen roaming like the boys either in the market or elsewhere. Children of both genders are victimized by poverty, limited exposure to the outside world and tribal norms, but girls remain inside their homes while boys roam around in order to grow enough to do work and earn money.

Gender Differences in Upbringing

Usually, male children are given priority over female children almost everywhere in the sub-continent. The centuries-long, generation-to-generation traditions prioritize boys over girls. Boys remain the centre of attention for parents and other relatives. They have the freedom to hit, scold and abuse female family members, especially their sisters. The Urdu feminist short story writer, Shoro (2007), writes:

The independence of a seven- or eight-year-old boy in the tribal culture of Sindh is acceptable to the extent that he can scold his sisters, mother, maternal and paternal aunts and force them to stop doing anything, and this attitude is highly regarded as a manly sign.¹⁸⁶ (Shoro, 2007: 139)

¹⁸⁶ My translation.

Girls are expected to be submissive and timid. From the very beginning of her life, a female child comes to know her limitations and boundaries and the superiority of male children in her family. Girls' every movement, from walking to talking and laughing, is checked by the senior female members of the family so that they should remain within the parameters of the culture. Sen (1990) explains how in South Asia female fetuses are aborted and female infants killed in the son-preference culture. In a small city of Sindh where I lived as a child, there was a woman in our neighbourhood who used to give birth to a child every year.¹⁸⁷ Out of her desire to have more male children, she gave birth to eight daughters and four sons. Once, during a very cold winter my mother saw her daughters playing outside her home without shoes or warm clothes. My mother almost scolded her for not providing the girls with proper clothing. She whispered to my mother, 'There are eight of them. How would I collect a huge dowry for them? Let the harsh weather finish off a few at least'. Girls are liabilities, girls are a burden, girls are inferior and girls are a constant threat to the honour of the family. Discrimination against women is one of the leading social problems in rural Sindh, as Kakepoto (2005) states:

The preference for the birth of a son is distinct. This may possibly be attributed to the needs of a working hand in an agricultural society. Thus, when a woman is pregnant, everyone in the family prays for the birth of a son. When it happens, everyone in the family is exhilarated and they jointly celebrate. In contrast, the baby girl is somewhat unwelcome. On the birth of a female baby, everyone including her father feels disappointed. At times, it results in the wife being cursed and beaten up by the family members. This is more severe when previous births were also female. (Kakepoto, 2005: 3)

The son-preference culture has a devastating impact on female children. In a culture 'where the birth of a female child in the family is mourned and birth of a male child is celebrated' (Khan, 2006: 211), girls are provided with less food, clothing and other necessities. A girl is expected to learn and be expert in home chores at a very young age. Most of these girls bear a double burden. They do housework as well as outside fieldwork. Girls are expected to wear a *dupatta* from the age of five or six. Ferdoos (2010: 8) states that this is observed very strictly in Baluchistan to the extent that when girls reach the age of seven or eight, they are not

¹⁸⁷ Two decades ago, there was no possibility of knowing the sex of a child in a mother's womb; therefore she had to deliver a baby. In these days, after knowing the sex, aborting a female foetus is a common trend in the sub-continent. 'India's 2011 census shows a serious decline in the number of girls under the age of seven - activists fear eight million female foetuses may have been aborted in the past decade' (Pandey, 23 May 2011).

allowed to go out any longer without the company of a *mehram*¹⁸⁸ from the family. Girls were kept busy doing home chores or provided with a very restricted and intense space to play with home-made cloth dolls but the male children went out, roamed around and played typical male games such as cricket and hockey.

a) Games

When I interviewed him, Ishtiak (26) said: ‘In Baloch culture, children do not normally play at home. They play outside with other boys’. I enquired, ‘Children, you mean ... girls and boys?’ He replied promptly, ‘No, not girls and boys. Girls have to play with their sisters and female cousins at home and help their mothers to do home chores. They do not go out but boys remain out for quite a long time and come home late’. The experience of another male participant, Tarik (29), was similar to that of Ishtiak:

I play cricket a lot. Cricket has been my passion since my childhood. One of my brothers is also a good cricketer. However, we do not play with our sisters. Sisters have to do work at home and have, you know, girlish activities like playing with dolls and doing embroidery. (Tarik, 29)

Men grow up in a comparatively wider domain than women but some of their childhood circumstances are not different from or better than those of female children. Indeed, several male participants suffered more as their circumstances led them towards child labour. Larik (2011: 5) called this “a complex phenomenon to be tackled” and claimed that child labour is generally perceived in terms of population pressure, inadequate educational facilities, poverty and low employment, especially in agriculture and in the large informal sector, such as cattle-grazing, clearing and collecting animal dung and processing it to dry in order to be used as a fuel source, and working at tea-houses, restaurants, motor-workshops and garages. The participants who had experienced child labour had no happy memories of their childhood to share. Zahid (45) did not remember any game he had played but said, ‘Like every child I might have played some games but I cannot remember as from very young age, let us say from the age of five, I worked as a shepherd’. Hayat (22) told me about his childhood:

¹⁸⁸ Close blood relative. *Mehram* is the legal term denoting a relationship by blood, milk, marriage, which makes marriage between persons so related forbidden. The term is also used in sense that *mehram* persons are those with whom one can mix freely and be on informal terms. *Na-mehram* literally denotes any person of the opposite sex whose kinship does not represent an impediment for marriage (Khatib-Chahidi, 1993: 114 cited in Ferdoos, 2010: 7).

I still remember how badly I wanted to have a ball of my own. Throughout my childhood, I longed for a cricket ball but I could not have one and I used to think that one day I would grow up and have enough money to buy a ball. (Hayat, 22)

Like those of my male participants, the female interviewees' childhoods were also difficult but it was different and the women accepted their restrictions as their destiny. The women called their childhood dull and colourless and told me that instead of toys they were given brooms to clean the homes and dishes and clothes to wash. Anjum (27) recalled: 'We could not play any games in our childhood due to the strict system at home. Even my mother was not allowed to go to her parents and other relatives'. Shahadat (30) said she remained busy with home chores and asked me, 'How can a poor child play?' Khan (2006: 56) stated that 'In the cultures where male blood is more precious than female blood due to a peculiar kind of economic system, and the patrilocal and the patrilineal social system, women internalise the idea of the 'valuelessness' of women's blood'. Defying any such socially sanctioned view is difficult but my female participants criticised the prevailing system and expressed their concern over the unrestricted domain of boys and men and the limited sphere of girls and women. For example, Perveen's (27) childhood was passed looking after goats and cows and helping her mother to dry the dung of the animals. However, she told me without any feeling but in a sharp tone, 'While I and my mother worked inside the house, my brothers remained out of our home to play with their friends most of the time'. Anger was noticeable in her eyes; it gave the impression that she had not fully internalized the system.

Some of the female participants played with cloth dolls. Nonetheless, some had been forced by adult family members either not to play with dolls or to play only in the way they were directed. Naheed (25) told me, 'Playing with dolls was my favourite game but my maternal grandfather was very strict and whenever he saw me playing with my dolls he either hit me or broke my dolls'. Marriages between dolls are a part of girls' games but Aasiya (23) was forced to play with her dolls in a different way:

I had three female dolls and one male doll, made of clothes and sticks. Because my mother did not allow us to do marriages of dolls, the male doll was my female dolls' brother who used to take them shopping and to visit other relatives' homes. Since I did not like my brothers, I only made one male doll to play with the three female dolls. (Aasiya, 23)

Aasiya thought that the restriction might be because girls should not think about their marriage and the procedure involved. Her assumption might be right, but making one brother for three sisters showed her grievances with brothers or men and their assertive roles. Nevertheless, making one male doll was necessary: even in her imagination she could not envisage a doll going out without male protection.

Such restrictions on women are evident in every sphere in upper Sindh, such as in education where the gender difference is obvious. Education in general has not been a priority of the powerful native *waderas* of upper Sindh, who virtually control the villages of the area; consequently, the local system of upper Sindh is also not favourable to the promotion of education. Education broadens people's vision and capacity to think and analyse. Therefore educated people in general and educated mothers in particular are a threat to the tribal culture. Both genders have limited access to education, but girls are more restricted than boys. No man among my interviewees had been forced to leave school by his family whereas those women who went to school and showed an interest in education did not have family support and were forced by their brothers or parents to discontinue their studies.

b) Education

Of my 26 participants, sixteen had gone to school; of these, six were women and ten were men. The ten male participants' educational experiences explain how, one way or another, they remained uneducated. For instance, Yaseen (36) said: 'You know I was a typical Baloch child and the significance of a Baloch child is that he does not ask for food but asks for weapons, so I was a typical Baloch child'.¹⁸⁹ Since Baloch culture is based on warrior values, a Baloch boy is expected to learn the use of weapons rather than go to school. However, the field of education is itself not violence free. Violent clashes among students in schools and college over various ethnic, religious and political issues are often reported. Sharif (16) went to school but left early.

Actually, once there was a fight between me and some other children in the school. They belonged to a different caste and were rich so they did not want me to be there.

¹⁸⁹ The Balochi nation is very proud of its identity as a martial race: 'Weapons are the Adornment of Baloch men' is a traditional Baloch saying.

You know boys ... they were the fighter type of boys. After that fight, I was badly beaten by one of my teachers so I left the school and did not go back again. (Sharif, 16)

Violence in schools is committed not only by students but also by teachers. This is particularly prevalent in rural areas, as clarified by Hina (2000: 22).

Schools have no efficient supervision to control verbal and physical violence among students. Financially and socially weak students suffer more. Clashes among students are often dealt with by violence and severe punishments by teachers become a strong reason for male students to leave education.

Sadly, these violent elements in education also provide a justification for closing schools in villages. However, such violence is not a new phenomenon in this region. Sikandar (83), a Muslim who had attended a school in what is now India before the Partition in 1947, talked to me about his school experience:

I went to school but the Hindu teachers used to beat us very harshly. In fact, they intended that Muslims should remain illiterate and ignorant. They thought that if Muslims studied and learned maths, they would understand the interest system and might stand as strong as Hindus, so they discouraged Muslim boys and beat them miserably. I was also tortured a great deal. They gave very brutal punishments and that was the time parents could not complain about teachers' behaviour. Students were left with only one option, to leave school – so I did so, like hundreds others. I also left school with no certificate in my hand. It was a success for the Hindu teachers. However, I was able to recite the Qur'an with the help of a *molvi*.

The discrimination against Muslim students continued in India and still goes on post-Partition.¹⁹⁰ It might be expected that when Pakistan came into being as a result of the Partition, discriminatory attitudes in education would have reduced but this proved to be the beginning of another strong anti-education phenomenon. Zahid (45) observed:

The landlords of our areas do not want people to study because the *waderas* know that if people study, they would learn how to maintain a record of their income and then they would not let *wadera* and his people exploit their labour. This is highly

¹⁹⁰ An Indian newspaper, *The Hindu*, published a report on 5 April 2012 with the heading, 'Shutting the school doors on the Muslim child' which commented that: 'The increasing communalisation of social spaces is limiting the educational choices of Muslim students'. The report claimed that Muslim parents show a clear preference for not sending their children to government schools and said, 'we want schools that do not discriminate against our children'.

unacceptable for the landowners so they want illiterate people. So you see the schools buildings are converted into the *otagues*¹⁹¹ of the *waderas*. (Zahid, 45)

Interestingly, Sikandar's and Zahid's comments relate to two culturally different times, before and after the 1947 Partition. Sikandar held a Hindu teacher responsible for not letting Muslim children study before the Partition whereas Zahid held the local landowners accountable for the contemporary poor state of education. However, both men's opinion was that illiterate people suit the needs of rich tribal landlords and are easily exploited. Many other reasons not to continue studying that were interlinked with extreme violence were also explained in many of the interviews I conducted for my field research. Ameer (38) seemed serious about his studies:

I passed my primary from a local school and went to college. That was two miles away from my village but then I stopped studying when the trouble [that is, after he had killed his cousin as *karo* with his sister] occurred. All of a sudden our lives changed and I had to leave education, hockey, home ... almost everything. (Ameer, 38)

Tarik (29) had passed his matriculation. Then after a gap of nine years due to his having killed his wife and a man as *karo-kari*, he was eventually able to secure admission to a college.

Poverty, disappointment, anger, all these emotions made me feel that education is not for poor people like me. You know, education needs or demands money ... money for the uniform, shoes, books and copies. And you even need money for going to the school. Isn't that so? We were poor peasants so I gave in. That was indeed a very tough time for me. (Tarik, 29)

Toor and Perveen (2009) point out that although school attendance is subsidised, the cost of books, uniforms and transportation to school can be too much to bear for poor families. However, for Ameer and Tarik the cost of books and stationery was not the only reason for leaving education. They had to abandon their education because they had killed people to save their honour.

The profound impacts and effects of poverty are apparent in the accounts of the participants who could not be educated. The men who remained completely illiterate considered poverty and the ruthless education system to be responsible for this. Hayat (22) said: 'I grew up as an

¹⁹¹ Living room.

orphan. No-one was there to guide me, help me or support me. I grew up in very tough circumstances. Who could make me study? Life is brutal here'. Zahid (45) asked:

School? Poverty did not let us even think of school. We had to move from one place to another in search of food. Besides, you probably know that teachers in upper Sindh do not teach in villages. They just draw a salary and a large number of schools are ghosts¹⁹² so education was a kind of different and difficult thing ... at least for us. (Zahid, 45)

A number of reasons, the combination of socio-cultural factors, such as poverty, violence and the state of government-run schools had deprived my male participants of education but they were not prevented from going to school by their parents like some of my female participants.

Six of the female participants had some experience of schooling but had faced specific obstacles to their education. Nayab (22) had the opportunity to study until the age of five but when her father died her brothers did not let her continue school. Nevertheless, she completed learning the Qur'an with a *molvi* at a nearby mosque.¹⁹³ Aasiya (23) went to school for a few years and her account reflects that of Zahid above.

You know in the system of education here in our village either the teachers do not come or the schools are not open, so how I could study. No-one was there to look after it so whenever we went, we normally found it closed. I did not learn anything from school. (Aasiya, 23)

Tasleem (21) went to school and was in fact encouraged to study by a relative, nevertheless this proved to be a harsh experience.

¹⁹² The term 'ghost school', meaning fake schools, became famous during the reign of the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haque (1977-1988), when entire institutions started to become chaotic (*see* Chapter Two). The signs of educational deterioration began in the villages where influential landlords turned schools into stables and rest houses and people had no organized structure to react or raise their voices. Teachers stopped going to the schools and the attendance of the students reduced. Despite a change in government and various articles written to save education, no visible change was seen in the rural educational structure. These remarks of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, were published in the newspaper *Dawn* on 11 February 2013: 'There are animals kept in schools and the buildings have been turned into stables. The government has failed to provide any answer or details about the state of ghost and non-functional schools, while apparently funds and salaries were being disbursed as buildings remain abandoned or occupied by animals'. He ordered district judges across Pakistan to survey fake schools and submit a report.

¹⁹³ Many of the participants were reluctant to call themselves uneducated as they claimed to be able to recite the Qur'an. Along with fundamentalists and extremists, villagers – especially those from tribal areas – believe that the Qur'an is the only source of education therefore all people, particularly women, should only read and recite the Qur'an. An important point to be noted here is that, in a country like Pakistan, the Qur'an has to be read in Arabic (in which it was revealed) but the majority cannot understand Arabic.

My crime was that I wanted to study to become either a doctor or a lawyer. Nobody wanted me to go to school because no-one had ever studied in our village before therefore it was not acceptable to them. However, one of my aunts who lived in Karachi paid a visit to us and convinced my father to send me to school. (Tasleem, 21)

Although Tasleem's teachers had praised her, other schoolmates had ridiculed her. She would not have been given the opportunity to go on to year six by her family had she not obtained a scholarship from her school. The scholarship was sufficient for her to buy her school shoes, uniform, books and stationery, but when she began year six, she faced a difficult time.

When I went into year six I noticed that one boy used to follow me and passed vulgar comments about me. I thought that if I did not let my parents and brothers know about it, it might become worse. When I told my elder brother about him, my brother beat the boy outside but he also stopped me going to school. That was a very difficult situation for me. I requested and begged my parents and brothers but nobody was ready to listen to me. Instead, they prepared me for marriage. (Tasleem, 21)

This situation was similar to that exposed in Mohanraj's research (2010) in the context of India, which describes how girls were being sexually exploited on the way to the school. Mohanraj explains that the safekeeping of girls' sexuality becomes a major factor underpinning early marriages.

However, Tasleem would not surrender to her parents' decision about her marriage at the age of twelve; she ran away from home for Karachi with RS600 and a dream of conquering the world. Yet, she ended up in a worse situation because of that flight. She was sexually abused and brought back to her home by her parents with the help of the police, and her parents then virtually imprisoned her at their house and she became the target of mental and physical abuse by the whole family.

The varied accounts of the seven women participants who remained away from education showed that they stayed illiterate for three main reasons: poverty, ignorance and the belief that education is not for girls but only for boys. For example, Shahadat (30) explained why she was uneducated: 'We were poor people. Poverty does not know education. It demands only food'. Naheed (25) said that the reason for being uneducated was ignorance: 'My maternal grandfather and maternal uncles were very cruel and did not let any one of us study in school'. The belief that schools are only for boys prevented Najia (20) from going to school. She said,

‘I am uneducated because my father was so strict and ordered that no girl could ever go to school. My brothers went to the school but they studied for few classes, like up to year five only’. Similarly, one of the female participants had had to leave her studies because her addict father had not allowed her to continue. This reflects Khan’s findings that ‘Men of the family have full authority, and can allow, forbid, or curtail the physical movement of their women’ (Khan, 2006: 214).

Khan (2006: 339) stated that parents have the authority to forbid daughters from going to school, especially when they reach puberty. In addition, parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school because of their belief that girls should live within the four walls of the house. Moreover, she cited many Sindhi and Balochi sayings that condemn girls’ education which begin with ‘If girls were to receive education, then ...’. These maxims convey the message that girls’ education is a threat to the culture, family reputation and honour. Toor and Perveen (2009: 13) argued that ‘[g]enerally parents remain reluctant to spend money on female children as they believe that the girls would eventually be married and live with their in-laws so they see the investment as a waste’. Parents are more likely to view educating sons as an investment because the sons will be responsible for the financial support of aging parents. The result is that the literacy rate for women in Pakistan is one of the lowest in the world. Other studies which have focused on the area have already reported this: ‘As the socially prescribed role for women is limited to raising a family, education is never a priority for girls’ (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987: 38). My findings indicate that, in a culture where nearly 72% of girls are married before they turn eighteen,¹⁹⁴ parents do not want their girls to go to school or be educated for two reasons. First, they want girls to care for their younger siblings or to learn home chores and other home-related skills as early as possible. Second, an uneducated girl more easily agrees to a marriage arranged by her parents.

Mode of Marriages and Relations with In-Laws

Khan (2006: 338) pointed out that ‘in Pakistan, more than 90 per cent of daughters’ marriages are decided by parents, especially by fathers. They are mostly arranged and many times forced marriages where unmatched husbands are chosen by the family, older, handicapped or

¹⁹⁴ *The Express Tribune*, 22 January 2013.

illiterate in many cases'. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) (2008), 'two-thirds of marriages in Pakistan are consanguineous'. Consanguineous marriages can be divided into two types according to the familial relations involved. The first is cross-cousin marriage, in which a man marries his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, and the second type is parallel-cousin marriage which means that a man marries his mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter (PDHS, 2008). There are also three types of consanguineous marriage according to the specific arrangement involved: exchange marriage, bride-wealth marriage and simple consanguineous marriage without money or exchange, and these will be discussed separately next.

a) Exchange Marriage

Of all the participants, eight of the women and five of the men's mode of marriage were exchange marriages,¹⁹⁵ so overall, out of the 26 participants, thirteen had married through this method. As Jacoby and Mansuri (2008: 1) explain, '[r]emarkably, bride exchange, known as *watta-satta*, [which] now accounts for about a third of all marriages in rural Pakistan, and is even more prevalent in parts of Sindh, usually involves the simultaneous marriage of a brother-sister pair from two households'. In Sindh, in a *watta-satta* marriage, a girl is given to a family for marriage and, in return, that family gives another girl for marriage. In effect, this means that the two families exchange girls with each other.

In some cases, however, when a girl is given to a man in marriage but the man's family has no marriageable girl to give in exchange, the man's family will promise to give two or even three young women when they reach marriageable age in the future. If no girls are available then a promise has to be made that any baby girls born to a given woman will eventually be given in exchange. As Jacoby and Mansuri (2008: 28) explained:

[m]arriage in rural Pakistan is often arranged by parents well in advance of the actual ceremony, sometimes when the principals are still children. In particular, if there is a sufficiently large age gap between the two couples involved in the *watta-satta*, the second couple may not yet be married and, possibly, not even born!

¹⁹⁵ Jacoby and Mansuri (2008) suggest that contemporaneous sibling exchange marriages appear to occur in the south of India and other parts of the South Asia. Zhang (2000: 57) clarifies that exchange marriage is also documented in parts of China.

Tarik (29) had been married in this type of *watto-satto*.

We got two girls from a family for me and my brother, as around fifteen years ago my aunt was given to that family in marriage and it was decided that in return her two yet-to-be-born girls plus another girl would be given to us. Altogether three girls for one marriageable girl, got it, sister? (Tarik, 29)

‘Why three girls for one girl?’ I asked. Tarik explained the system in detail.

Because my aunt was mature and was of marriageable age and surely we needed something in return. So my grandfather decided that at least one small girl of that family should be reserved for us and be given to us when she becomes mature and when my aunt would deliver two girls they would also be ours. Because you know, you cannot predict regarding the child who is not yet born so it was necessary that one already-born girl be taken. (Tarik, 29)

Tarik elaborated the process further and told me that although people normally understand this process as *watto-satto*, this method is actually called *pet likhi dean*.¹⁹⁶

You see now, I had a second marriage last year and I did the same. I took a mature girl as my wife from a family and gave my daughter (from the first wife) as well as my uncle’s daughter to them. The promise was made that when the girls reach marriageable ages, they would be given to them.

Thus, the concept of exchange marriage seems to imply a woman for a woman or a life for a life, but the value of a mature woman is weighed as equivalent to two or three minor girls or future girls.

It was surprising that the five male interviewees who had married in *watta-satta* described a happy life, saying that they were kind and respectful to their wives as well as their in-laws. The men claimed that they treated their wives as queens who were provided with everything they needed. They described their marital lives in detail too, however, I could not find any traces of torture, cruelty, disrespect or injustice, although two of them admitted to killing their wives for (allegedly) committing adultery. Despite killing their wives as *karis*, along with men as *karos*, these men faced no hostility from their in-laws. In this way, they receive the benefit

¹⁹⁶ In Sindhi, the trend or custom *pet likhi dean* literally means ‘written womb’ (agreeing to give away a child yet unborn). In this tradition a family gives one girl to the other family in marriage with a condition that (one or two) future daughters of the given girl are given to the girl’s family.

of consanguineous marriages. Tarik (29), who remained on good terms with his in-laws after killing his wife, spoke excitedly regarding this point.

Great, well, right up to today, I am getting on really well with my in-laws. My mother-in-law is my paternal aunt, that is the main relation and most of them understood my situation and blamed my wife for whatever wrong she did. (Tarik, 29)

Naseer (65) who had married his paternal uncle's daughter in exchange explained.

You know our Baloch culture: wherever our parents wanted, we married but before deciding my marriage my parents asked me. She had also seen me as I was her cousin so I liked her and gave my consent to my parents and then we were married. (Naseer, 65)

Naseer, who had killed his wife after seeing her in a compromising position with a man, said that he had admired her: 'She was indeed very good. She knew how to handle happy and sad moments. She was very decent'. Of his in-laws he said: 'Parents-in-law are also like parents. I always respected them and they loved me. They were my uncle and aunt so they were always good with us. I was just like a son to them'. In these cases, the killers were not only protected from the police and the law by their in-laws (who were also very close relatives) but also they were admired by their in-laws for doing an honourable deed. Their versions were in complete contrast to the interpretations of the eight female participants who had married in *watto-satto* and were unfortunate in various ways. Moreover, the exchanged women's accounts were not as simple as the men's since they had serious grievances against consanguineous and exchange marriages.

Tasleem (21) explained that she had been victimized by the process of *pet likhi dean*. She had been given in marriage in an exchange for her mother because at the time of her mother's marriage, her father's family had no female child to give, so there was a verbal agreement that her mother would give one of her female children to the family according to the custom of *watto-satto*.

My maternal grandfather made my mother marry my father on a promise that my mother would give birth to two girls to be given in exchange for her. I was my mother's second daughter so I was born somewhat engaged to my maternal uncle's son. I had no other choice but to accept the marriage. (Tasleem, 21)

Upon my inquiry about what her life was like after her marriage, she replied that from the very day of her marriage a very difficult life began. After three days of sexual and physical torture by her drunken addict husband, she became unconscious due to heavy bleeding. When her brother was informed, he took her to a hospital. After an examination, the female doctor shouted at her husband and other relatives and threatened to report them to the police. Her in-laws were unfriendly and aggressive towards her. In addition, her parents did not come to ask how she was. This experience reflects Jacoby and Mansuri's (2008: 1) statement that:

Husbands generally have coercive power over their wives through various forms of physical and emotional intimidation. In virilocal societies, this power is heightened by the wife's residence in her in-laws' household, making it costly for her natal family to continually monitor her treatment.

In addition, in this tribal culture, parents do not want their daughter to come back to them after marriage. Consequently, they normally do not pay attention to her sufferings. Indeed, there is a traditional saying that 'A girl should go out of a home's four walls twice only; from the parents' home to the husband's home and then from the husband's home to the graveyard'.

Najia (20) and Aasiya (23) married as *watta-satta* and, as well as tolerating their drug-addict husbands, they had other problems to face. They were both married in exchange for their brothers' wives so they were treated the way their brothers treated their wives. Najia loved a boy in her neighbourhood but she could not marry him as she was promised in exchange for the wives of her two brothers. At the age of thirteen or fourteen, her uncle forced her parents to marry her to his drug-addict son. Upon her refusal to marry him, her two uncles came to her parents' home with rifles and threatened that if she did not agree to marry they would kill her. Her parents, being scared, agreed because, as she explained, 'my uncles were strong and notorious for fighting. They had killed two people so everyone was frightened of them. I was given two choices – either to be killed or to marry that man'. She told me that as the wives of her brothers (for whom she had been exchanged) were not happy with their husbands, they persuaded their brother to take revenge on her. As a result, her husband tried to strangle her on her wedding night. For three days, she endured severe torture. After this, she told her mother, who took her back home. Najia then refused to go back to her in-laws. In response to this, her sisters-in-law left her parents' home and returned to their parents, as it was an exchange

marriage, so her brothers beat her harshly and sent her back to her in-laws by force. As Jacoby and Mansuri (2008: 1) made clear:

Watta satta is more than just an exchange of daughters ... it also establishes the shadow of mutual threat across the marriages. In this arrangement, a husband who 'mistreats' his wife in certain ways can expect his brother-in-law to retaliate in kind against his sister.

Najia had not yet had a child at the time and explained regretfully: 'The continuous physical torture has made me sick. I could not accept it all as my destiny'. She continued:

My in-laws or my husband could have made me theirs by care and love but they only hated me, blamed me, beat me and nothing else. Throughout those two years, none of them gave me a single penny to spend. What does a woman not need? Sometimes my mother gave me a little amount or a dress but nothing else. Why should I live with them, to be abused or tortured or to die sick? During my illness, they did not buy a single tablet for me or ask me whether I was alive or not. I do not want to go to those barbarians again. (Najia, 20)

Noori (48) was married in exchange for another girl who was given to her brother in marriage. During her interview, she remembered how her married life had changed: 'I lived quite well with my husband until my brother died and his wife (my sister-in-law) being widowed started living with us'. It was a common complaint from the female participants that their female in-law family members made their lives more difficult.

Lerner (1986: 217) explains that 'the system of patriarchy can function only with the cooperation of women'. This cooperation is secured by a variety of means such as 'gender indoctrination, educational deprivation, the dividing of women, one from the other, by restraint and outright coercion' (Lerner, 1986: 217). Some women knowingly or unknowingly work to safeguard these patriarchal norms to obtain the good will of men. This seems the safest passage for these women to survive in that society, whatever rules and regulations have been imposed on them. To prove their compliance with patriarchal norms, it is necessary for them to be as violent against weaker women as men are. This is illustrated by the case of the murder of Ishtiak's (26) cousin. When I asked Ishtiak, who with the help of his male family member had killed his fifteen-year-old cousin on the suspicion of being *kari*, 'Did anyone or the mother of the girl try to rescue her?'

No, no, not at all. Her mother knew the tradition so she asked male members of the family to punish her accordingly. She felt hatred for her daughter. She clearly said that she had no relation with the girl as she had brought insult to the whole family. (Ishtiak, 26)

Whether it is extreme fear or having internalized the system, mothers not only favour the killing of their daughters but also ask men members of the family to punish the *kari*. This was the case when the mother-in-law of Sikandar (83) had informed him that her daughter, his fifteen-year-old pregnant wife, was a *kari*. Khan (2006: 51) supports this observation, stating that '[v]iolence against young women occurs with the open approval and connivance of mothers, too'. Whilst mothers do play a direct or indirect role in the killing of their daughters, there is no record available of any woman who has killed her daughter with her own hands in an honour killing. However, in many cases mothers' consent to and are physically present at the killing of their daughters is evident, such as in the very well-known case of Samia.¹⁹⁷ Noori (48) explained her relationship with her husband's family: 'In-laws are in-laws. They can never become parents. My brothers-in-law, my mother-in-law and my husband beat me for nothing. Hitting and beating me became a routine for them'. She explained how she had worked in the fields, milked buffaloes and cooked food for her family: 'I did as much as I could but I could not make my in-laws happy'. She now had five sons and three daughters. Her daughters were married in exchange for the girls given to her husband's brothers. She had two thirteen-year-old twin sons who had learning disabilities so she still fed them.¹⁹⁸ Noori spoke gloomily of her married life.

I could not take a sigh of relief at my in-laws. No-one has ever been happy with me. Nobody was there to look after or hold my hands for me. You know the Baloch system ... I had no-one to complain to. Do Baloch listen to their daughters? They throw their girls away as soon as possible in the name of marriage and then consider their girls dead. (Noori, 48)

¹⁹⁷ (See also footnote 73) 'On 6th April 1999, a 29 year-old woman, Samia Sarwar, was summarily executed in her lawyer's office located in a bustling business centre of Lahore, Pakistan. Samia had reluctantly agreed to a meeting with her mother and her attorney, Hina Jilani. Samia's mother, a Western trained gynaecologist, had brought with her a gunman who accomplished the task without much fuss. Samia's father and her maternal uncles were also accomplices to the murder. In spite of the relentless press attention, nobody was arrested. Samia was killed because she was alleged to have brought shame to her family and tradition by asking for a divorce from her husband, Imran, on the grounds of alleged domestic violence and his habitual drug abuse' (Jafri, 2008:1).

¹⁹⁸ It is known that the closer the genetic relationship between the parents, the greater are the risk of birth defects: 'Various types of genetic disorders have been reported to be more common among consanguineous children, such as congenital disorders, including neural tube defects and congenital heart defects: Autosomal recessive hearing loss disorders and visual defects such as early-onset retinal dystrophies, primary congenital glaucoma and ophthalmos' (Bittles, 2002: 95).

Although Noori was exchanged with a girl who was married to her brother, she had no support from any side because her brother refused to beat or divorce his wife. Thus, the purpose of consanguineous exchange marriage, that is, to maintain an equal balance on both sides so that either side could act in a bargaining position, did not work in this case. Jacoby and Mansuri (2008) explain that, in *watta-satta*, women mostly marry first cousins with a preference for the paternal side; if they do not marry someone related by blood then they are married within the same caste or clan, like Aasiya (23) who had been married at the age of sixteen.

They were not our relatives but were of the same *zaat*¹⁹⁹ and the people who arranged the marriage deceived my parents by saying that the boy was a government servant. In fact, he was a drug addict and jobless but my parents believed those people. (Aasiya, 23)

Aasiya's husband beat her every day for no apparent reason. Her in-laws used very abusive language with her.

The main reason was that I had six sisters-in-law. One was my brother's wife but the other five were unmarried and my husband worked as a pimp for them. He used to bring men home and called them uncles, but I knew what was going on in their home. (Aasiya, 23)

These men tried to have illicit relations with her too. Upon her refusal, her husband beat her so brutally that she was badly injured. Her head was bleeding but no-one took her to hospital. Aasiya sobbed as she told me what happened: 'My child died in my womb due to malnutrition. I developed asthma problems but I had no money to buy medicine as my husband had never given me a single penny'. She complained to her parents but they did not help because they did not want their daughter-in-law to leave her home. To fulfil her needs, she started to do home-chores at some well-off families' houses. In return, these families helped her by giving her some bread, vegetables, soap and other basic provisions.

It was like hell to live in that house. I was a simple and decent woman. I considered the life as my destiny. I worked at various houses to earn my living and I would have still been living with them if they had not blamed and threatened me to be killed as *kari*. (Aasiya, 23)

¹⁹⁹ Caste.

The irony was that she was forced by her husband to be a prostitute in a society in which women are killed mercilessly under the charge of infidelity. Women are judged in terms of honour and the violation of the concomitant restrictions is punished by death. Aasiya was eventually called *kari*; but her crime was to refuse to sell her body and she was condemned for it. The strongly gendered system favours a man to the extent that when he fails to force his wife to work as prostitute, he blames her as *kari* with someone whom she does not even know. When threatened with being killed as *kari*, the woman who does not want to be a prostitute has no forum to explain or express her innocence. Moreover, the man is still considered innocent and the woman is expected to be killed because she has been called *kari* by her husband.

Greed and conspiracies in these cases are not always as visible as in the case of Shahadat (30). She was married in exchange for another girl who was given to her paternal uncle in marriage. She got on well with her simple and humble husband but she faced trouble from her husband's step-brother. Her father-in-law had had two wives. Her mothers-in-law both died before her marriage and, soon after her marriage, her father-in-law also died and left seven acres of land to both his sons. Being clever, her husband's step-brother took the larger and better piece of the land and gave them the barren part, which was far from their home. She said:

I requested that my brother-in-law should give us half of the fertile land and take half of our barren land but he always fought with us. It was very difficult for me to look after four young children as well as the cattle, and to go quite far carrying the sacks of dung on my head and shoulders to drop them on our land to be dried. (Shahadat, 30)

The dispute caused conflict; the step-brother used to beat both her and her husband and eventually she was called *kari* and was threatened with death by her brother-in-law. She, like all my other female participants, considered *watta-satta* to be a curse as she was of the opinion that in these marriages, husbands and in-laws are bound to take revenge.

In relation to this practice, Jacoby and Mansuri (2008: 4) pointed out that '[e]xchange marriage clearly facilitates endogamy by forging a double union among two families, but this does not seem to be the sole motivation for the arrangement in rural Pakistan'. For example, forcing a daughter to marry her cousin to keep property in the family or forcing a daughter to marry 'an unmatched (much older, richer) person for financial benefit are some of the implicit economic motives' (Khan, 2006: 338). However, those who do not own property and are poor

also prefer consanguineous marriages as a matter of prestige. They believe that giving their girls to other tribes is an insult, as in their opinion it is better to sort out marital issues among the kin group. In addition, painful stories about cruelties from husband and in-laws are often told about marriage into other castes and tribes. For instance, a folk song says, ‘Oh my beloved mother! It would have been much better had you drowned me instead of handing me over to outsiders’.²⁰⁰

b) Bride-wealth Marriage

The practice of bride-wealth is close to that of bride-price, a marriage practice in sub-Saharan Africa. Jacoby (1995) links this latter marriage practice to the relatively high value of female agricultural labour where it coexists with a high incidence of polygyny. However, bride-wealth in Sindh is normally a direct payment from the groom’s family to the bride’s parents, which is not common in urban areas of Pakistan. Bride-wealth is commonly known as *vikio*, *viknan* or *vikro*²⁰¹ in the local language of upper Sindh.

Shabana (18) was given for money by her maternal grandparents who had already given her mother for money before her. Shabana was in love with one of her paternal uncle’s sons. Before her marriage, she ran away from home with her lover but, after a friend of her cousin betrayed them and told of their flight, her grandmother brought her back with the support and help of the *wadera* of the village. Her grandmother then beat her and forced her to marry the man from a Baloch tribe to whom she was already engaged. She was sold for RS100,000. After her marriage as bride-wealth, Shabana was the target of physical torture. Her sister-in-law encouraged her husband to beat her. She explained her in-laws’ attitude to her, saying:

My in-laws did not give me a single penny. They did not let me talk to anyone in the village. From the very first day of my marriage, they called me *kari*. I said if you knew I was a *kari* why did you accept me then. My husband replied that it was because he wanted to take revenge on me. (Shabana, 18)

Similarly, Moomal (18) who was married for bride-wealth by her maternal grandfather explained her situation as follows.

²⁰⁰ My translation.

²⁰¹ Literally, bride-price, sell or sold.

Soon after selling my mother, my maternal grandfather sold my elder sister and then me. I'm not sure about the exact amount but for sure it was more than RS100,000. Even before the beginning of my menstrual periods, I was sold in marriage to a 50-year-old man and I was just thirteen years old. My husband worked as a peasant but he was addicted to drugs and gambling. My husband was a cruel man but my eldest brother-in-law was a real menace. My husband remained in an intoxicated condition most of the time. I was the target of physical and mental abuse by my in-laws, especially by my sister-in-law and brother-in-law. (Moomal, 18)

When she talked about her relationship with her in-laws, Moomal seemed frightened. One of her aunts had a television at her home so sometimes after completing her home chores she used to go to watch television at her aunt's home in the neighbourhood. When her brother-in-law came there and saw her watching the television, he grabbed her by her hair and dragged her all the way back to her home and warned her that if he saw her watching television again he would kill her.

He could not bear me smiling and talking to anyone. My husband was almost a useless tool in that house. My brother-in-law was a kind of ruler at home. Everyone had to listen to him. He was too aggressive. On any petty pretext, he used to pull me and throw me around. He hit me with slaps and kicks but no-one ever came forward to rescue me. I had no-one to complain to; whenever I complained to my husband, my husband threatened to divorce me. (Moomal, 18)

The threat of divorce is an effective weapon in the hands of men. As Jacoby and Mansuri (2008: 1) explain: '[i]n traditional societies, where women's formal legal rights are often weak, divorce is strongly stigmatized, bargaining power can shift radically in favour of the man once the woman commits herself to marriage'. Thus, not only are the men aware that their wives' natal family cannot accept them back, they also know that the women are financially dependent on them and, in the case of divorce, the woman would be left alone with children without any financial and physical support. In addition, a woman remains scared of divorce as she knows that after a divorce, if she goes back to her parents, they will sell her to another man. Nazia (26) was the third female participant who was married through bride-wealth.

When my father went into debt and the gamblers began bothering him to repay his loans, he asked my paternal cousin if he would marry me for RS45,000. The cousin agreed and paid the money to my father and I was given to him in the name of marriage. (Nazia, 26)

Nazia said that for three years she had been treated well by her in-laws but after three years of marriage, they accused her as *kari*. Women married as bride-wealth are treated even more severely than women who are exchanged. The reason for this is that, in exchange marriages, in-laws of both sides have equal power. If one side abuses the married woman, the other side abuses in return.

Levi-Strauss (1969: 471) appropriately called bride-wealth, 'marriage by purchase'. Like exchange marriages, through the practice of bride-wealth, the women participants faced violence from their husbands as well as from their in-laws. Yet the two men, Majid (36) and Fayaz (22), who said that they had paid money to have women in marriage, told of different experiences. They were not only happy with this type of marriage but also had pleasant relationship with their in-laws.

I paid RS80,000 to the bride's parents. It was a compatible match as I was 28 and she was 24. We both remained happy. She was beautiful, hardworking and was very good in other home chores as well. I liked her very much. She also showed her love for me. (Majid, 36)

Fayaz explained the mixed method of his marriage: 'I married my paternal uncle's daughter at the age of eighteen. My uncle gave her to us and we promised to give him my future baby girl. In addition, I paid him RS25,000'. Fayaz was clearly happy as he said, 'I was getting on really well with my wife and my in-laws. We paid visits to each other's home and looked after each other in difficult times'. I asked him how he felt about the baby his wife was expecting; unusually, he was hoping for a girl: 'If she does not give birth to a baby girl? What then?' To this question, Fayaz replied, 'God is great. God understands intentions and promises. I am sure to have a baby girl and you see most women deliver girls not boys'. This detail gave me the impression that not only the woman whom Fayaz had married but also the expected female foetus was to be sold even before it was born.

As in *watto-satto* marriage, the men's accounts of bride-wealth marriage were absolutely the opposite of the accounts of the wives who had survived. Many of the men said that they always treated their wives with respect until they saw their honour at risk; it was therefore because of their adulterous wives that they became killers to save their honour. In fact, no woman was happy with her bride-wealth married life and no man seemed unhappy.

c) Simple Consanguineous Marriage

Although most participants, irrespective of their gender, were in consanguineous marriages which had various mix-and-match methods including those involving money, six of my participants, four men and two women, were in consanguineous marriages that were neither *watta-satta* nor bride-wealth. Two women, Naheed (25) and Fatima (55), had been asked to marry men selected by their fathers. Naheed wanted to marry her maternal cousin but instead she was made to marry her paternal uncle's son, also a cousin. She had told her mother about her own choice but her mother had strictly rejected this. When her husband asked her about her own choice before her enforced marriage, she had told him that she was not interested in anyone before her marriage. She still had no children. Speaking about her marriage, she explained how abusive it had been.

From day one, my husband's attitude to me was not good. He used to beat me mercilessly. Although my parents-in-law were my real aunt and uncle, they always encouraged him to beat me. I stayed with them for four years. In all these years, there was hardly any day when I was not beaten up or abused by my in-laws. (Naheed, 25)

In relation to simple consanguineous marriage, Hoobai (2000) stated: 'Parents in upper Sindh remain reluctant to give a daughter for free'. This means a marriage without money or an exchange girl, as these are a kind of guarantee that the parents are in a bargaining position. On this point, my mother told me that there are two other reasons for not giving girls in marriage without *watto-satto* or bride-wealth. First, the community calls these girls valueless and the parents feel humiliated. Second, the girls themselves hate it as they believe that they will be considered orphans and so be treated like slaves.

Fatima, now a mother of five children, had married seventeen years earlier. She recalled how her marriage had been: 'In the beginning, my husband used to give me proper food and was caring as well. My in-laws were also happy with me. Then gradually I developed a kind of disease that made me weaker and weaker. Can you see how my body is shaking?' Fatima had Parkinson's disease and she thought that ghosts had occupied her body so she needed to go to a shrine to get rid of them. Due to the lack of medical facilities and education, people link uncommon diseases such as Parkinson's to ghosts or spirits. In deep sorrow, she explained:

Then my in-laws started beating and hitting me because they thought that I was pretending. I was unable to do labour in the fields. As a result, I became the target of verbal and physical abuse. Although I was trying to work as hard as I could, I had no stamina left to work according to their demands. (Fatima, 55)

After the birth of her fifth child, Fatima had felt extremely weak and was unable to walk, talk or have intercourse. This made her husband furious and he started beating and abusing her more severely, and told her, 'You are not my mother that I should feed you for nothing as you are useless to me'. When she recounted this, Fatima burst into tears. Her whole body was shaking. A wife who cannot have intercourse with her husband is a useless woman. She is considered a liability. Consequently, her husband was not prepared to provide food for her. Fatima wiped her eyes with her *dupatta* and said, 'I asked him to marry another woman but not throw me out as I had no-one else to go to'. She believed that the main reason for her troublesome life was that she had been given neither in *watto-satto* nor as bride-wealth, otherwise she felt that she would have been treated differently.

The marriages of four of the men, Sikandar (83), Yaseen (36), Ameer (38) and Ghulam (26), had also been decided by their elders with no exchange of girls or money involved. As in other forms of marriage, the men's versions differed radically from the accounts of the women as they demonstrated the men's contentment with their marriages. Yaseen defined the mode of his exchanged marriage.

I married my paternal uncle's daughter in 1999 and I have one daughter and one son. You know in our childhood, our elders and parents decide even at the birth of a child who would be married with whom. Therefore, I knew from my childhood that my uncle's daughter would be my wife. (Yaseen, 36)

Both Sikandar and Yaseen had lived well with their wives for some time but later developed grievances whereas Ghulam and Ameer remained happy with their wives. Ameer (38) appreciated his wife: 'My wife is very humble so I am blessed that I am comfortable'. Moreover, they all claimed to have ideal relationships with their in-laws because of the common factor that they married the daughters of their paternal uncles.

Overall, of the 26 participants, 24 of their marriages were consanguineous: thirteen married as *watto-satto*, five as bride-wealth, and six participants' marriages were consanguineous

marriages but were neither exchanged nor bride-wealth. These three modes of marriage have a few features in common. The most common trend was that it was mainly the male members of their families, such as fathers, uncles and brothers, with the support of senior females, who arranged the marriages. In some cases, parents were the prime decision-makers in the marriages of both sons and daughters and the individual's consent was not given importance. Traditionally, marriages other than those based on bride-wealth were among paternal relatives' children only. The tribal tradition of consanguineous marriage in any form favoured men in a way that even after killing their wives, they could remain friendly with their in-laws and did not face any reaction from them. In the cases when they were arrested, they could make maximum benefit of the law of *Qisas* and *Diyat*. Under these laws, blood money allows the offender to absolve himself from the crime or killing by paying compensation to the victims or their heirs (who are usually relatives), if the heirs have agreed to this. This is called a 'settlement' and, in the cases of honour killing examined in my field research, such a settlement was most often seen because the offenders and the heirs of the victim are normally related.

Not one of the women was happy or content. The female participants voiced grievances either with their husbands or with their in-laws. Marriage in exchange, bride-wealth or marriage within or outside the kin group did not seem to resolve any family problems. Furthermore, the arranged marriages seemed unsuccessful in protecting the women from violence, and the uneducated and financially deprived women had no way to protect themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how violence is embedded in every phase of life in upper Sindh. My interviewees' accounts have provided substantial evidence that violence is endemic within and outside the domestic boundaries. Because they have very little access to the outside world, inhabitants of this region consider traditional tribal culture to be the only honourable way of living. They have therefore adopted very fundamental perceptions of their tribal society including acceptance of honour-related violence. In fact, the whole system in upper Sindh functions through violence. The agrarian, economic and tribal social structures have established a strong gendered division that strengthens discrimination by maintaining separate spheres for women and men; thus, boys and girls are given different treatment from their

childhood onwards. As the causes and consequences of this inequality, the structural violence remains enacted and has been accepted as an honourable way of living.

The occurrence of violence in everyday life in this strongly patriarchal culture makes women completely powerless and isolated; it also supports the traditional form of masculinity that suppresses women to such a degree that their lives are almost non-existent. In such a highly gendered system, women's suffering begins in their childhood and, after they leave their natal families, it continues within and after marriage. Whether their marriage is an exchange, bride-wealth or a form of consanguineous arrangement, violence is the main component. No woman can marry according to her personal wishes. In the name of marriage, women are sold, exchanged and coerced, and they face physical and mental violence from their in-laws and their husbands. Overall, people – both men and women – of such a traditional society are confined to a narrow domain where they do not know what their rights are, nor how to emerge from their socially and tribally constructed restrictions.

Chapter Five: Men's Stories of Violence

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall deal with the men's stories of violence in their personal, tribal, social, traditional and religious context, according to which they feel obliged to save their honour by killing. The aim of this chapter is to investigate what factors contribute to men's motives for killing and how they subsequently justify it. The complex phenomenon of honour killing can only be understood by scrutinising the various elements of their society that benefit from the persistent state of violence. On the basis of my data, I shall analyse how the system in upper Sindh not only saves killers from punishment after they have killed but also makes them feel uplifted.

I shall explore how a number of traditional sayings, religious interpretations and practices, and administrative loopholes are responsible for the perpetuation of honour killing. Moreover, as I shall discuss below, upper Sindh is virtually under the control of tribal and feudal leaders who rule these villages as their jurisdiction to the extent that the law-enforcement agencies accept their authority. The involvement of the *sardars* and *waderas* is one of the key issues to be understood in order to examine who benefits from honour killings. Thus, it can be argued that a number of social, religious, tribal and local elements are involved in maintaining the persistent state of honour killing.

In this chapter, I shall focus on the dynamics that make the men killers and which provide them with strong justifications for killing. I shall explain the methods of killing, the socio-cultural structure and the religious interpretations according to which the men believe that if any kinswoman is found guilty of falsehood she should be killed. I shall therefore also explore various elements that promote killings and help the murderers to get away without punishment. In particular, to explore the reasons why they are not arrested and punished, I shall highlight the role of the tribal leaders and their personal justice system.

The Men's Concept of Honour

When I questioned the male participants about their concept of honour, they repeated ideas similar to those of Ishtiak (26), who said: 'The women of our family are our honour'. Tribal and family honour is heavily dependent on the sexual and moral behaviour of women. Consequently, in order to protect men's honour, women are expected to behave not only modestly but also in the way the men deem acceptable. Women's sexuality is designated as the property of men and the right to look after this property is passed on from a woman's father and uncles to her brothers and then to her husband. Thus, before marriage, safeguarding a woman's sexual organs and body is the responsibility of the men of her natal family who decide to whom she should be given in marriage; and after marriage the safeguarding of the woman automatically shifts to her husband and his family. Kocturk (1992: 44) clarifies the traditional concept: '[t]he daughters have to safeguard their virginity and wives have to ensure their chastity'. As a result, if a woman violates men's ideal standards of female behaviour by having physical interaction or cordial relations with a man of her choice, this constitutes a threat to the men's honour. As one of the men I interviewed, Majid (36), explained: 'A woman after marriage becomes the honour of her husband and by having extra-marital relations with someone, she damages her husband's honour and then the man reacts'. Pirzado (1988) summarizes the way people of this region think:

We are men. They are women. We are strong. They are weak. We are the head of the house. They are mere inmates. We are husbands. They are wives. We can have more than one wife. But no woman can have more than one husband. We sometimes do kill a woman in cold blood because she tries to look beyond the walls of *chardiwari*.²⁰²

These rhetorical devices are used to shelter the men from criticism or punishment and as justification for their actions. For instance, Ishtiak (26) said: 'The women who do wrong have to be killed instantly'.

In many incidents, the acts of killing are perpetrated in response to the slightest suspicion of objectionable conduct by a woman. To protect the honour of their family, the appropriate option for men is what Radford (1992) calls 'femicide'. Radford (1992) found that in certain situations, when men found their honour threatened, they killed either the woman or the

²⁰² Four walls of a house.

couple to restore the honour of the whole family and the tribe. Similarly, in Mediterranean societies, Campbell (1964: 203) suggests that 'killing a wayward woman is seen as an act of purification for the whole family and not doing it quickly enough is perceived to be damaging to the family honour'. In northern Sindh, a wayward woman is considered to be a cancer in the body of the family that needs to be cut out. The entire family experiences acute shame when a female member violates the norm and the shame can only be redressed through a clear punitive response.

In his interview, Naseer (65) asserted that 'killing for honour is absolutely right. The only way to save honour is to kill those who attack your honour whether he is your blood relative or not. I cannot let anyone play with my honour. It is honour, not a joke'. This is reflected in Campbell's (1964: 193) words regarding the Mediterranean area: 'When the family honour is tarnished, it becomes imperative on the male members to restore the honour, blood must be shed'. In upper Sindh, killing to protect honour seems to be the only action to be taken on the perpetrators of such dishonour.

It is interesting that discussing honour was a very emotional matter for my male participants. The honour-related vocabulary that the men used was deeply emotive, indicating how much the issue mattered to them. Their firm tone expressed their determination to safeguard their honour. Hayat (22) said: 'When someone with bad intentions looks at our females, then honour burns and forces us [men] to react and kill those who challenge our honour'. Consequently, in most cases of honour, it is not only the woman causing the disgrace who is supposed to be killed but the man involved also has to be killed. All the male participants agreed that it is 'other men's' attitudes or behaviour that causes the problem and thus the killings happen. To understand whether the concept of the 'other men' is restricted to the men of other families or if they also considered themselves as the 'other men' to other families, I asked Naseer (65) the following question: 'Let's say, if you were found in the same way the killed man was found, what punishment would you expect?' He replied: 'Well ... the woman's family had the same right. They would have also not let me survive if they had honour'. 'Would that be right then?' I asked. He excitedly said:

Well ... as I said, honour killing is a true punishment. Then surely others would also have the same right to save their honour but it would be my luck or chance if I could

evade this or in some way rescue myself. Otherwise you know the destiny ... the end ... and if I avoided death, then I would consider myself lucky. Then I will be hidden somewhere until *faislo* with the woman's family by *sardar*. (Naseer, 65)

Naseer's reply indicated that he could be the 'other man' for any 'other family' and he believed that if he violated another family's honour, his life would depend upon the other family's standard of honour. He supposed that he would be rescued only if the other family had a lesser degree of honour. He also thought he could rescue himself until a *jirga* or *faislo* was called. The way the honour works in relation to *karo-kari* is that, if a woman's family does not kill a *kari*, then the family is dishonourable whereas if a *karo*'s family saves his life by any means, the family is regarded as honourable. So killing a woman as *kari* saves the honour of the *kari*'s family whereas saving a life of a *karo* saves the honour of the *karo*'s family.

Only through bloodshed can a man, a family or even a tribe regain their lost honour, as Ishtiak explained: 'In this way people learn what the difference between honour and dishonour is'. I asked Tarik (29): 'Why did you not divorce your wife instead of killing her?' He replied in a stubborn manner: 'I did not feel like it'. And carried on: 'If I gave her a divorce then I would have been the target of the whole society for being so weak and dishonoured, because I could not kill a person who attacked my honour and a wife who ruined my honour'. Clearly, Tarik felt that divorce would have been taken as a cowardly act and he preferred to kill his wife and the man involved because of the fear that he would be called a coward. Majid also thought that divorcing a wayward wife was not an honourable deed. Indeed, it is possible the men had never considered divorce as an option until I asked them. The social context of honour killing seems similar to that of Jackson's (1977) findings on social scripts and the motivation for rape:

Explanations for rape are not to be sought for within the individual psyche of rapist or victim but within our expected sexual mores, for it is these which condition interaction in rape settings and which provide vocabularies of motive for the rapist. (Jackson, 1977: 29)

Similarly, it is the conventional vocabulary of motive that makes honour killing a convenient option for the men. It is not a deviant action for them as the notion of honour killing is incorporated in this culture that makes such killing possible within particular situations. As

Mills (1940, cited in Jackson 1977: 30) states, 'motives are not merely inner states of mind but cultural creations governed by some delineated vocabulary by which individuals anticipate the outcome of their actions'. For instance, Majid asked: 'Why would I divorce her? How was it possible? Am I a woman? Women cannot kill but men kill to save their honour'. For Majid, it was not possible to see honour restoration in divorce, as for him divorce was a mean act, which was not manly but cowardly. Divorce is not a part of their vocabulary so it does not occur to them. Motive is a term of interpretation that does not let a man think beyond the falsely constructed norm of honour and provides him with justification for his acts in particular situations. As Ishtiaq (26) said: 'Nothing is greater than honour. Without honour what is life? Those who do not kill the unfaithful woman and man are the most dishonoured people'. There is a folk saying in Pakistan that says: 'If you lose money, nothing is lost, if you lose health something is lost, but if you lose honour, everything is lost'. To save themselves from utter loss, men's collective sense of honour requires them to shed blood to maintain the patriarchal culture. Thus, the honour of these men lies in killing. As Burke (1950: 25) commented, 'Motives are not mental or biological states that somehow impel actions; rather motives are social constructions through which actors impose meaning onto situations'.

The strongly felt and deeply entrenched sense of honour of the men of this region is pointed out by Rahman (2015) in her study of the area: '... the people can die and kill for honour. Honour is something they live upon without even thinking and understanding what the characteristics and demands of the word are'.²⁰³ My findings support the idea that honour overpowers every aspect of life in upper Sindh but I question whether the inhabitants of the region have any other option to survive honourably except for killing. They cannot raise their heads unless they have killed those who have so deeply damaged them. Although Tarik (29) admitted that honour killing is not good, he still asked the following question: 'Then what else can one do? It is the responsibility of a man to keep honour above everything else; therefore we see honour in honour killing'. Of the thirteen male interviewees, Ameer (38) was the only participant who thought that killing should not be the only way to restore the honour of the family.

²⁰³ My translation.

Thus, honour killing appears to be the only option to restore honour and determines the position of men in this culture in which, according to Shah (1998), '[a] man's ability to protect honour is always judged'. Tarik's concern about 'if not honour killing then what else' shows the limitations of actions and thoughts in a society that has set very inflexible and unyielding standards of honour. It is therefore vital to know the nature of the grave provocation that made the men in this study feel that their honour was being threatened. The common perception is that the loss of control of women's behaviour results in the family's disgrace. In addition to the seriousness of an offence such as seeing a kinswoman in an intimate position with someone, any small gesture from a woman can bring shame to the man, the family or maybe to the tribal reputation. Thus, if it appears that men cannot control their women, their honour is threatened.

Threats to the Men's Honour and the Modes of Killings

The men whom I interviewed in upper Sindh reacted differently over honour-related matters. These reactions can be divided into two categories: the men who detected a kinswoman in an objectionable situation (by which I mean a situation which they found objectionable) with someone and killed her (with the man or alone) spontaneously in a rage, and those who did not kill immediately but only after a series of incidents had raised their suspicions and they had then followed the thread for quite some time to be certain before attacking their prey. Majid (36), who worked as a driver, was one of those men who had seen their wives in an actual compromising situation and killed immediately. He had gone to another city and came home in the morning unexpectedly and found his wife with a younger brother-in-law.

No one expected me at that time because whenever I go out of the city, I normally come back in the afternoon of the following day. You know the tradition. After seeing this tragedy with my own eyes, I could not control myself. It was a kind of film of blood in front of my eyes and I could not think of anything else. The man tried to escape but I did not give him a chance to take the next breath and fired at him. My wife cried 'Help, Help' two or three times, but I killed them both instantly and that was the end. (Majid, 36)

The vocabulary of motive in a conventional honour-related script not only provides the killer with an acceptable account of his actions but also makes him feel no guilt for his crime and no

sympathy for the victim. Majid said that if he had left either of them alive, his conscience would have killed him. Only a dishonourable person could ignore the situation.

Naseer followed his wife when she left their house late in the evening, saying to him, ‘You stay at home, I will be back soon’.

I am also a human so I suspected something wrong as it was a very odd time and she had done so some days before as well. I therefore followed her. She went to an inn, which was not very far from our home ... I saw her going up the stairs. A man who was standing near the stairs like a guard latched up the staircase door. When he saw me unlatching it, he shouted at me ‘Don’t go there!’ But ... I just went straight up ... and opened the door to the room in which ... How shall I tell you ... I found my wife and the man naked. As soon as I saw them, without wasting a single moment, I fired at them and killed them. (Naseer, 65)

Because of the social approval for honour killing, murder appears an easy and inevitable act to them. Naseer’s version was, ‘I saw and I killed’. One of the things that made the immediate killing possible is that these men carried automatic guns with them. The availability of weapons multiplies the probability of killing. Sikandar’s (83) case has slight differences. His mother-in-law had told him that his wife (her daughter) was a *kari* and he beheaded his wife with an axe, after a dream which he interpreted as a message from God. He said: ‘I was sleeping outside my room. Suddenly I felt a jerk as if somebody shook my body and I heard a voice from nowhere: ‘Get up! Still sleeping?’ I picked up my axe and rose up ... and ... with an axe blow beheaded her [his wife]’. He believed that an upright man [like him] was always surrounded by good spirits (angels) and that these spirits did not want him to live an immoral life with a corrupt woman so they awakened him that night to kill his wife. He said: ‘I became happy as my conscience was clear. God punished her and I remained saved’.²⁰⁴

The definition of an upright man that Sikandar followed was the definition he had acquired from his culture and society, in which punishing or killing a wife for infidelity was the

²⁰⁴ It is common for people to connect their infrequent abrupt acts with intuitive or spiritual instincts. Battling superstitious elements is not easy especially in less educated, agrarian and extremely religious South Asian countries. Consequently, in countries like Pakistan and India, working against these irrational attitudes and the role of superstitious elements in everyday life means facing threats. Narendra Dabholkar, a prominent anti-superstition activist and campaigner who had been campaigning relentlessly for the last eighteen years for a law against religious superstition was shot and killed while out for a morning walk in the western Indian city of Pune (*The Guardian*, 20 August 2013). Shah (22 January 1993) states: ‘It is sufficient reason for a man in upper Sindh to kill his wife if he sees her committing adultery in his dream’.

responsibility of an upright man whether he has seen it in a dream or in real life. For these husbands, disloyalty by their wives was certainly intolerable. However, the show of masculine power, aggression and superiority over women can turn any man of a family into a killer no matter what relation he has with the *kari* woman. Thus, in order to keep women under strict control to defend honour, it is not only the husband who has the right to kill his wife as *kari* if she is seen doing something immoral but also of any man of the family. Yaseen (37), who killed his female cousin and a man, detailed how he saw his family's honour at risk.

I woke up early in the morning and went out. There is a canal that passes through our village. It is hardly fifteen to twenty steps away from my home. Since it was dry and filled with some weeds and bushes, it had become a type of trench at that time. I became conscious when I noticed someone in it as it was 5.45am and of course no-one could be there with good intentions. I identified the boy but the boy thought that I had not seen him as I went to the opposite side to dodge him. I went behind my home and I appeared from the other side. When I got near from the other side of the canal I saw that my cousin [a daughter of his paternal uncle] was with him.²⁰⁵ (Yaseen, 37)

Yaseen continued: 'I still remember every minute detail of that incident. It was 6.15am. The boy did not realize the situation and thought that I had not seen them. I not only had a *kalashankov*²⁰⁶ on my shoulder but also a dagger. Since the distance was small, I just took my dagger out and cut their throats'. I asked: 'Did they not try to run or shout?' In a calm and composed tone, Yaseen said:

He tried to run but he could not because he was inside the channel. I jumped on to him and did not give him a chance to run. First, I cut his throat and then turned to the girl and did the same to her. It was a very sharp dagger. It hardly took five to six minutes. I cut their throats at once. (Yaseen, 37)

Culturally, the more quickly the killing attempt happens in honour-related cases, the more respected the killer is. As Majid (36) said: 'Thinking of the consequences of honour killing is a sign of a dishonourable man'. Legally, the cultural notion of killing is defended as murder in a fit of fury or anger, and heat of passion is the plea most frequently used in honour killing. Killers easily get away with murder by taking advantage of the provision of sudden

²⁰⁵ It is a significant question how, in such a strict society where the punishment for infidelity is certain instant death, a woman is able to find a man and manage to have an affair when she has so very limited chances to see or meet 'other men'.

²⁰⁶ The military dictator Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) made Pakistan play a major role in the Afghan war against the Soviets. As a result, Afghan refugees came to Pakistan in the name of Muslim brotherhood and brought *heroin* (drugs) and *kalashankov* (weapons) into Pakistan.

provocation. Yet those who follow a guilty couple for some reasonable time and then decide to kill them also benefit from the legal provision of defence of honour.

For some male participants, honour killing, being different from passion killing, was a calculated murder in the service of preserving the culture. The pursuit made a type of web or noose around the targeted couple. Tarik (29) was among those who planned to pounce on the two victims. Tarik waited for four months to find the right timing to catch his wife committing an offence. He told me that one night when their daughter started crying, he called his wife but she was not there. Later, she came into the room. After a few nights, the same thing happened. His wife was again not in the room. That made Tarik suspicious. He went out of the house and saw the shadow of a man going away. He identified the man and quickly came back home, took his rifle and went out, searched around but he did not find him so he came home intending to discover the truth. Tarik described what happened next.

Suspicion was killing me from inside and being very disturbed I started thinking about my wife and the other man. I kept visualizing the two nights, when I called her and she was not at home. I lost interest in everything. When people asked why I was upset, I said I was not feeling well. One day I was in the market ... suddenly, I noticed the suspected man there. He saw me while I was busy talking with a shopkeeper. He was sitting outside a small tea shop, and he finished his cup of tea quickly and got on a bus that goes to the station near my home. He thought that I had not seen him but I kept an eye on his every move. As soon as he caught the bus I said to myself, he must be going to my house. I took the next bus. When I got off the bus outside my village, I looked at my home from a distance and I noticed that beside the dried canal, he was sitting with my wife. Since the canal was on the left side of my house and my house was straight ahead from where I was, I kept walking without letting them notice that I had seen them. I pretended that I did not see them. I entered my house, took my rifle, the bullet-box and went straight out; but, as they had seen me coming, by then my wife was entering my house and when I went out, the boy was also walking away. (Tarik, 29)

This was a long story. Tarik used to imagine his wife along with the man and that triggered the pain he was suffering. His anxiety grew with each passing day. His only target was to kill those who had attacked his honour but he wanted to do so with solid justification. To live honourably in this society he was supposed to respond accordingly, no matter how much time the pursuit took. Tarik told me the way he had killed them.

I fired at him. The bullet hit his leg. He fell in the dried canal. I was walking along the edge of the canal. Meanwhile people gathered and one man held me tight and another

tried to snatch my weapon.²⁰⁷ I could not be controlled. When I shouted at them, they left me and separated and I ran after the man. When I reached him, he asked, ‘Why are you killing me, tell me my fault?’ I called his wife a whore and said ‘You are asking what your crime is as if you haven’t committed any fault’. And I fired at his body and forehead. He fell over. After killing him, I rushed to my home ... My wife was hiding inside my neighbour’s home. She was in a small room that did not have a latch inside it. I called her. I told my neighbours to bring her out immediately. They were reluctant to throw her out for some fifteen to twenty minutes. I kicked, hit, abused some of them and said ‘If you don’t let her come out I will shoot as many as I can’. Eventually, they realized that I would not leave her at any cost. Then they said, ‘OK, take her to your house and kill her there’. They forced her to go out but as you know life is very dear to everyone and she would not come out. They almost pulled and threw her out. She tried to run towards my house. I fired, she fell in between the two houses. My second bullet hit her in the chest. Then I put the rifle to her head and shot her for third time. (Tarik, 29)

Tarik, still enraged, showed his wrath by abusing the *karo*’s wife. In the men’s world, even women who are not part of any quarrel are often abused and humiliated, and the frequently used derogatory sexual terms are used to refer to mothers, sisters and wives. Insulting women in everyday conversation is common among the men. As in Tarik’s case, in which his wife took shelter in their neighbour’s house but was eventually thrown out to be murdered cold-bloodedly, the women are absolutely helpless in these situations and cannot find any support from any side. Often, the community’s role remains passive. In this situation nobody comes forward to rescue a *kari*. Tarik’s comment ‘she tried to run towards my home’ illustrates how women in this masculine culture have no home.²⁰⁸ Being polluted she could not be allowed to enter that house any more.

Hayat (22) described how he followed his female cousin for six months before killing her with the *karo*.

I saw a stranger walking around our area. I became suspicious as I knew that he was from another area. Normally these strangers roam around others’ areas when they have bad intentions. I thought he must have come here for some wrong purpose but ... I needed to be sure. From that day, I started keeping an eye on the man and the situation as well. The second time I saw the man he was alone at night about 10pm, standing

²⁰⁷ ‘Illegal weapons are being smuggled into the province from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Often the police seize these weapons but do nothing to control this growing menace. Regrettably, the illegal business of weapons has polluted the entire society. As a result, fratricidal killings, kidnappings for ransom and tribal feuds have alarmingly increased in Sindh’ (*Abro*, 6 March 2011). ‘There are estimated 20 million illegal arms in circulation in Pakistan’ (*The Express Tribune*, 17 May 2012).

²⁰⁸ A woman uses her energies and potential to make a home out of very little but cannot become the owner. Both at her natal family as well as at her in-laws, she lives like a worker and in many cases as a slave.

near my uncle's dried fish-farm. It was a dark night. Then I saw a shadow of a woman, my cousin, at a distance. I noticed some sign language between them. I became sure that whatever I understood was right. I decided that if I saw them again I would kill them. The third time, I saw the man standing near that farm at night and then my cousin started walking towards it. She reached the man and then both went to a house. I was keeping eye on their every movement. (Hayat, 22)

I asked: 'Inside whose house?'

It was a kind of empty plot of someone's, not a complete house. The outer walls had no gate. I followed them. Both entered a room. So I decided to wait outside as I knew they would come out eventually. I had brought the girl's brother with me to see what was going on. If I had not brought him with me I would have been in a great trouble from both sides. (Hayat, 22)

I understood his point but in order to be sure I asked: 'From both sides?' He replied 'Yes. I wanted my cousin's family to support me. Only then would I be considered innocent otherwise it would be difficult for me to justify the killings. With the man's families one can easily do *khair*²⁰⁹ through a *sardar*'. He explained what happened next.

I stood outside the house and my cousin sat on small wall around the house. They were both [his female cousin and the man] in the room. The man came out of the room to answer his cell phone. He could only utter 'hello' on the phone, my cousin shot him. As soon as he fired I stepped in and I also fired at him. We both went inside the room and did the same to the girl. First I shot her and then her brother shot her. She died straightaway like the man. (Hayat, 22)

In some cases, the matter of honour appears so sensitive that even a virgin girl could be killed as a *kari*.

My three uncles lived near our house. One of my uncle's daughters went to a boy's house that was just two kilometres away from our house. In fact, she wanted to run away with the boy but the boy's family did not make it possible. The boy was not at home at that time. As soon as she reached their house, the boy's father made the girl sit and informed my uncle. My uncles then sent us a message to get to the boy's house quickly. When we reached the boy's house, the girl was sitting there. It was a matter of *karo-kari*, as you know. We brought our girl back. You know, this is a very strong Balochi custom that if something immoral happens we kill the person who causes insult to the family. (Ishtiak, 26)

²⁰⁹ Agreement

I asked: ‘Did you ask her why she went there?’ Ishtiak said, ‘Yes, we enquired thoroughly. She admitted her fault that she left home because she wanted to marry the boy. It was clear. It was visible. She was a *kari*’.

In this case, the girl’s absence from her house for about thirty minutes was seen as disobedience, a shame to the family’s reputation. Although she did not run away and no sign of physical relations with the boy was detected, her rebellious act was still interpreted as dishonouring. The girl’s desire to marry a man of her choice was to be punished severely to convey the message, especially to young girls, that a certain death will be inflicted if they think of crossing the delicate boundaries of honour. The reinforcement of such actions spreads terror among the women of the family. In this case, it appeared that the boy whom the girl wanted to marry did not have enough courage to run away with the girl. But what if they had run away? Ishtiak’s firm reply was clear.

How long? Five or six years is a normal time period to search for a *karo* couple. We have not seen any one who had been rescued after an allegation of *karo*. A *karo* or *kari* definitely have to be killed, no matter how much time passes. They cannot hide on earth from a true Baloch. The culprit has to be found. A *karo* has to be killed today, tomorrow or day after tomorrow ... no way, no rescue, no mercy upon *karo* and *kari*. But no-one else will kill a *karo* or both except the girl’s legitimate relative.²¹⁰ (Ishtiak, 26)

Although I have read a great deal of literature on the modes of honour killing, I have not come across any method of killing similar to that of Ishtiak.

We brought the girl [his paternal cousin] to her father’s home. First our plan was to kill both as *karo-kari* but, you know, a son is so adorable to his parents that they hid him somewhere but we did justice to our girl according to our Baloch custom. We gave her the punishment she deserved. (Ishtiak, 26)

He gave me the complete details of how they had killed her (the conversation which we had is reported in full in Chapter Four in the section on Conducting Interviews). I felt myself terrified at the story of drugging and then strangling the girl and asked: ‘Did you mix the tablets in the

²¹⁰ Chasing a runaway couple becomes the target of the tribe for generations. The men of the tribe whose girl runs away take an oath that they will not wear new clothes or celebrate any festival until they kill the couple. A number of stories published in magazines and newspapers tell that some couples were found as many as ten or fifteen years after and were brutally killed, along with their children.

tea before her eyes?’ ‘Yes, so that she should know’. To my surprise I queried, ‘Did she ask for mercy or something else ...?’ His reply was very assertive.

No, nothing, not a single word. She was a Baloch child and knew what was going to happen to her. From a very tender age, our children learn how important honour is. She knew that an immoral girl would face death. So we, as well as she, knew the consequences of drinking the tea. My father, my uncle, her two brothers, I and her fiancé strangled her with her own *dupatta*. It barely took two minutes, not even two minutes. The drug had already finished her. I mean the strangling was only a matter of ritual. She could not survive after such a drug but as an honourable deed, we all strangled her. (Ishtiak, 26)

‘What about her mother ... did she not plead to save her daughter?’ I asked. The very swift reply was: ‘Her mother clearly said that she was a curse so she asked us [men] to finish her as she could not bear the stink of her’. Ishtiak’s answer reminded me of Sikandar’s account in which he was told by his mother-in-law that his wife was a *kari* so she should be punished. In general, the older women mostly seek to enforce conformity by favouring their men when questions regarding a younger woman’s sexual behaviour are asked. Gilligan (1996: 231) suggests that ‘[g]ender codes reinforce the socialization of girls and women, socializing them to acquiesce in, support, defend and cling to the traditional set of social roles and to enforce conformity on other females as well’.

I could not ask Ishtiak what was done to his cousin’s dead body but there are many shocking stories that tell how the *kari*’s dead bodies are treated. According to an editorial in *Paigham* (2004: 62) ‘Sindh’s Baloch tribes hate to touch the dead bodies of their *karis*. Their corpses are dragged by their feet and are thrown away in the forest, without digging the ground for their graves, so that animals will eat the dead bodies’.²¹¹

In a situation where every killer was unapologetic for his killings, Ameer (38) was the only one who considered any alternative to killing. He believed that killing is not the sole option to save honour. Ameer told of his efforts to avoid killing his male cousin as a *karo*.

He was actually my cousin (father’s maternal uncle’s son). Besides, he was also my friend. He used to come to our home being a relative but then gradually it was not a secret that he had a love affair with my younger sister. Since I was an educated person,

²¹¹ My translation.

I understood my society, our Balochi norms, tradition and custom, so to save everyone I asked the boy to marry her. I wanted the issue to be settled soon before it became the talk of the town. I offered the solution to the boy himself, his father, his mother ... as I thought marriage the only reasonable, peaceful and logical solution. But the parents of the boy, instead of listening to me or thinking about the severity of the matter, abused me and said that I was blaming their son. They called me greedy and accused me of asking for my sister's marriage with their son due to their wealth. I said, 'I admit that we are poor and you occupy a better place in this society, but don't forget that you are at fault. Your son had started the game and you know in our culture how such issues are tackled. Do you understand? Otherwise, you know, we also need to survive as part of this culture. We cannot bear these types of relations'. I had the idea that if the issue was not taken seriously then killings would happen and that's what I wanted to avoid. I knew these things travel so fast in our tribal areas and so if we did not kill the two who were involved with each other, our society would not let us survive. We would be the target of insult; people would spit in our faces. In addition, the boy's intentions were highly dubious. He just wanted to be out of the scene. His elders and parents were insulting us and he stopped coming or talking to me. Eventually his family told me that I should forget the issue. I now say that the boy's family deliberately put me into the worst situation and asked for the disaster which ... later became almost impossible to sort out. (Ameer, 38)

Ameer's attitude was clearly different to those of the other participants. He was the only interviewee who suggested that honour-related matters could be tackled without violence. However, he understood the difference in values between urban and rural life, saying: 'Our society is not an urban society where these issues have been tackled in a different way. It is a tribal society. We are not liberal or bold people'. Unlike other participants, he called urban people bold and liberal; usually urbanised people are considered dishonourable by the tribal men. Nevertheless, Ameer felt he had no other option but to kill to save his family's honour.

One day, I saw the boy in Baluchistan. When he saw me, he became scared. We were standing in front of each other. I had a pistol in my pocket, I had been waiting for this day and without wasting a single minute, I fired at him. He ... he was instantly ... dead. (Ameer, 38)

Ameer held the view that the rigidity of the tribal society was responsible for making him a killer, explaining that the society's collective cultural and communal standards do not have room for a substitute for killing. Honour killings, like other heinous crimes, are based on the socially approved 'script' that supports the predator to carry out the 'act'. These scripts provide the motivational basis for killings. Such killings were strongly justified by the killers because for them these killings were in accord with not only local cultural values, but also with their own deeply internalized sense of honour – and also their religious interpretation.

After Killing: Feelings and Justifications

Soon after the killings, I felt great pain. I saw my little children crying loudly over the bullet-ridden body of my wife. I thought who would look after my children? Who will cook food for them? My heart was broken. Everything appeared dark and gloomy. However, I spoke to myself and tried to be composed. I said to myself, 'What is done, is done. Time does not come back'. Whatever was written in destiny had happened. What could I do? It was a cruel joke of nature upon me. The son of a bitch [the *karo*] ruined everything. (Tarik, 29)

Tarik, who killed his wife and a man in *karo-kari*, was shattered after seeing his children weeping and crying over the dead body of their mother but simultaneously he gained comfort through his thought: 'The killings were in accord with the true Islamic teaching. A disloyal woman shall not be given a right to live on earth'. All the men had clear explanations, valid within the local culture, for the honour killings. They were influenced by religious interpretations and said that they merely followed the directives set down in their ethical Islamic beliefs. Thus, since the killers believed that honour killing is justified in Islam, the killing of an unfaithful wife was a duty imposed on them by Islamic order.

In a marriage, the Qur'an is held between the bride and the groom and they take an oath to remain loyal to each other. The bride recites some of the verses of the Qur'an and so does the man. The *nikah* happens. It should be respected. It is the Islamic way. I believe that evil deeds invite disaster. Islam does not allow anyone to do such a shameful act or be disloyal. (Majid, 36)

Their primary source of Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an, clearly considers adultery a major sin and suggests a judicial or community response not an individual one. In addition, the Qur'an, in *Surat an-Nur*,²¹² describes the specific punishments related to *zina* which are explained by the Islamic scholar, Maududi (1942-1972),

The woman and the man, guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day, and let some of the believers witness the punishment inflicted on them.

Although the above explanation does not indicate that the Qur'an permits or suggests honour killing, the men had firm faith that the honour killings were carried out in accordance with the

²¹² *The Light*, 24: 2.

Qur'an: since most rural dwellers are illiterate and have only learned the Qur'an in Arabic (which they do not understand) by heart, their understanding of it is necessarily narrow and their access to the *hadith* or any other Qur'anic literature to explain the Qur'an is limited. They have only the preachings of local clerics to guide their beliefs. Ishtiak emphasised this view that honour killings are in accordance with religious requirements.

Being men, our status is higher than women because we are the giver and the provider. So obedience to us is the duty of our women and in return protecting them is our duty. We shall keep a vigilant eye on their conduct to safeguard our honour. We are Muslims and understand that nothing is greater than religious belief and honour. Soon we shall all die and what will make us survive in the world after is our honourable deeds, which will save us on the day of judgment and nothing else. God helps those who preserve their honour. Those who do wrong have to be killed instantly. We call honour killing a *jihad*.²¹³ (Ishtiak, 26)

Despite the fact that the Qur'an considers all humans equal and gives equal regard to men and women, the translations of many verses from the Qur'an indicate the authority of men over women. Khan (2006: 86) explains: 'if we examine the structure of duties and rights and responsibilities determined in the Qur'an for Muslim men and women, we find there is a discrepancy between the duties and rights of both genders within the family units'. One translation says: 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given them more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means' (cited in Khan, 2006: 87).²¹⁴ Muslim scholars' commentaries on the Qur'anic verses also present an unbalanced status between men and women. For example, Haqq and Newton (1996) quoted the commentary of a very famous Muslim commentator, Al Razi (1159- 1210).

The male's share is that of two females. Man is more perfect than the woman in creation, and intelligence and in the religious sphere, such as the suitability to be a judge, and a leader in worship. Also the testimony of the man is twice that of the woman. So that whoever is given great responsibilities must be given correspondingly great privileges. As the woman is deficient in intelligence and of great lust, if she is given much money, much corruption will be the result. (Haqq & Newton, 1996: 31)

Such explanations of Qur'anic verses by Muslim scholars that testify to man's superiority over woman are further elaborated by the religious preachers of this area and have largely been

²¹³ Fighting in the name of God.

²¹⁴ Translation of the holy Qur'an 4:34 by Abdullah Yousuf Ali.

accepted by the tribal society.²¹⁵ In relation to this, Sharif (16) explained how he understood Islamic teaching to condone his actions.

My peace of mind is my gift that I received from God after the killing. I killed him in accordance with the Qur'anic teaching. So I am satisfied that I performed my duty honourably. As you know in our Islam it is clearly mentioned that we are the guardians of our women and if they mistreat our honour, we shall punish them for their dishonourable actions. Second, we have a great tradition of defending our honour. We have to kill or be killed for honour, which we have been doing for centuries and these are the instructions of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). (Sharif, 16)

Historically, the practice of honour killing is not limited only to Islamic countries. Ortner (1978) found that honour killing, apart from the Middle East and south East Asia, is prevalent in Latin American and Mediterranean peasant societies, various Indian castes and among Chinese elites. Lang (2000: 55) claims that the murder of a girl or a woman committed by her brother, father or a combination of male relatives in the name of restoring the family's social reputation also occur among Druze, Christians and Sephardic Jews. Nonetheless, during the last few decades, as suggested by Faqir (2001:3): 'extensive reports about honour killing appearing in the media are from Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Jordan, Bangladesh and Palestine'. However, honour killing cases reported outside the Islamic countries are also occurring among Muslim families which have migrated to different continents. That strengthens the belief that the exercise of honour killing among Muslims is not only a cultural practice but also has the protection of Islam and is being carried out as a practice of Islamic *Sharia* law, as discussed in Chapter One.

Mirza (2008) argues that: '[a]s per Islamic justice – unmarried fornicators receive a hundred lashes but married adulterers must die by stoning, as described in the *Sahi Hadiths*'.²¹⁶ The point to be noted is that as well as the primary source of Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an, the *Hadith* and *Sunnah* go side-by-side with it to make the Qur'an intelligible. The following are

²¹⁵ *Molvis* in the mosque are the source of knowledge for the people but the *molvis* are not scholars. Most *molvis* do not understand Arabic any better than the common men in upper Sindh.

²¹⁶ 'The *Hadith* relates the saying and tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the form of stories of the prophet's deeds and sayings narrated by his companions and relatives' (Khan, 2006: 86). 'The *Hadith* is the commentary of the Qur'an and its explanation' (Haqq & Newton, 1996: 3).

two quotations about Islamic ethics regarding adultery from the two authentic books of Hadith; *Sahi Bukhari* and *Sahi Muslim*.²¹⁷

1: Narrated by Abu Huraira: A man from Bani Aslam came to Allah's Apostle while he was in the mosque and called [the Prophet] saying, 'O Allah's Apostle! I have committed illegal sexual intercourse'. On that the Prophet turned his face from him to the other side, whereupon the man moved to the side towards which the Prophet had turned his face, and said, 'O Allah's Apostle! I have committed illegal sexual intercourse'. The Prophet turned his face [from him] to the other side whereupon the man moved to the side towards which the Prophet had turned his face, and repeated his statement. The Prophet turned his face [from him] to the other side again. The man moved again and repeated his statement for the fourth time. So when the man had given witness four times against himself, the Prophet called him and said, 'Are you insane?' He replied, 'No'. The Prophet then said [to his companions], 'Go and stone him to death'. The man was a married one. Jabir bin 'Abdullah Al-Ansari said: 'I was one of those who stoned him. We stoned him at the Musalla [the I'd praying place] in Medina. When the stones hit him with their sharp edges, he fled, but we caught him at Al-Harra and stoned him till he died. (See also *Bukhari*: Volume 7, Book 63, Number 195) (Mirza, 2008)

2: A woman came to the prophet and asked for purification by seeking punishment. He told her to go away and seek God's forgiveness. She persisted four times and admitted she was pregnant. He told her to wait until she had given birth. Then he said that the Muslim community should wait until she had weaned her child. When the day arrived for the child to take solid food, Muhammad handed the child over to the community. And when he had given command over her and she was put in a hole up to her breast, he ordered the people to stone her. Khalid b. al-Walid came forward with a stone, which he threw at her head, and when the blood spurted on her face he cursed her. (See also *Sahi Muslim* No. 4206) (Mirza, 2008)

The *Sahi Hadiths* presented above suggest that the Prophet Muhammad, under Allah's direction, ordered adulterers to be stoned to death. The following remarks of the Saudi Ambassador to London, Ghazi al-Qusaibi, have been quoted by many researchers: 'Stoning may seem irrational to the Western minds but it is at the core of the Islamic faith and the

²¹⁷ Of the six major *hadith* collections, *Sahi Al-Bukhaari* and *Sahi Muslim* are regarded as the most authentic and authoritative books, after Al-Qur'an. Indeed the very word *Sahi* means authentic.

Westerners should respect Muslim culture on this matter' (Arlandson, 2013). In this regard, it can be seen that the Islamic *Sharia* law supports stoning to death in the matter of adultery. In other Islamic countries such as Iran, stoning and flogging adulterers even today is a legal practice.²¹⁸ Both *Human Rights Watch* and the Justice Ministry have made clear that Afghanistan is considering bringing back stoning for adultery.²¹⁹ In Pakistan, however, although having adulterers stoned to death is allowed under the law, it is not actually carried out in practice: 'Courts often sentenced women to be stoned to death for adultery, although the punishment was not carried out' (Khan, 2006: 243). However, various parts of the Islamic world have adopted honour killing according to their individual culture and not necessarily as a requirement of *Sharia* law, as in Pakistan. Here, it has been adopted from various tribal cultures such as Balochi culture; men take such killings into their own hands and commit the deed individually, and if necessary they are prepared to claim a religious justification for their actions. Thus, Naseer (65), who was content that he was being a true Muslim, killed his wife and the man she was seeing so as to follow the teachings of the *Sunnah*.

It was a trauma I had been suffering through. It was the beginning of an unending tragedy that ruined everything I had made after a long struggle. But what I could remember was the only thing that I killed for the sake of God in compliance with the instructions of my prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Our Islam does not permit us this immorality. To see such shameful act with my eyes, if I had closed my eyes and had not killed them how would I have shown my face to God on the day of judgment? Could I prove that I had followed of my beloved Prophet (peace be upon him)? (Naseer, 65)

If the men had any sense of repentance, guilt or sorrow, it was only momentary as their strong defences were woven around their understanding of the Qur'an, *Hadith* and *Sunnah*. Hence, They had limited feelings and extensive justification. Hayat's (22) explanation of how he felt his actions were completely justified exemplifies their attitude.

If I again see such a kind of situation, for upholding the honour of my family, my tribe, I can kill even more than two people. Not once but as many times as possible. I will

²¹⁸ 'All death sentences in Iran must be upheld by the Supreme Court. Article 102 states that men will be buried up to their waists and women up to their breasts for the purpose of execution by stoning. Article 104 states, with reference to the penalty for adultery, that the stones used should not be large enough to kill the person by one or two strikes, nor should they be so small that they could not be defined as stones' (Amnesty International UK, 22 December 2004).

²¹⁹ *Human Rights Watch* (25 November, 2013).

work to please God as long as I am alive! My act was and will remain in accordance with *Sharia*. (Hayat, 22)

Thus, the combination of religious interpretations and the institutions of family and community, tradition and ethical tribal values support the occurrence and persistence of extreme violence. The social pressure becomes one of the strongest reasons to kill and provides approval for the killers, who are admired, whereas those who avoid killing are insulted by their relatives, neighbours and the whole community.

The Honour Killers and Society

The highly esteemed killers who were not in jail were proud of their acts. Sikandar (83), who had killed his wife in 1951, said: ‘That was a time when honour killing was not as common as it is these days so people were so curious they travelled from the villages all around to see and meet me. They used to ask each other, ‘Have you seen the young brave boy who killed his wife to save his honour’’. Sikandar told me with great self-respect: ‘Pride, admiration and respect is for those who keep their honour higher than anything else in the world’. The killers were socialized through the conventionally accepted cultural norms, within which killing is acceptable. Some common phrases used by the men which illustrate this were: ‘Women are our honour and if somehow they are misguided, men shall teach them by force’; ‘Those who look down on your honour shall face strong reaction’; ‘A dishonoured woman must be killed’; ‘A *kari* is supposed to be killed instantly’; ‘Only a dishonoured man does not kill a *kari* to save his honour’; ‘A dishonoured man is worse than a dog or cat and shall have no right to enjoy a social life’; ‘The honour killer is the most honourable man’ and ‘What kind of men are those who cannot control women under their control?’ (Khan, 2006: 53). Honour killing, in fact, makes an ordinary man special and superior in the warrior culture of the area. This was made very clear in the interview with Ameer, the man who was reluctant to kill but had eventually killed his cousin.

After this honour killing ... you cannot imagine how people felt about me. They appreciated and praised me not only in my presence but also in my absence. And I feel that due to this honourable act, my respect and value has increased in the society. But ... Oh God! If I had not killed their sister, believe me, the world would have appeared a kind of hell to me. Those who have not killed their family’s women over such allegations are considered cowards and their value is less than a dog or a cat. The

system, the culture, the tradition is so dangerous. You cannot imagine the insulting remarks people pass about those who don't kill. People laugh at them. They spit behind them. They are considered dishonoured to the extent that people do not want to talk to them and cannot eat with them by saying that eating with these besmirched men is a curse. Their names become obscenities. (Ameer, 38)

Upper Sindh's tribal culture survives through the persistence of the traditional rituals in which honour killing is one of the most commendable acts. Honour, according to some killers' accounts, is normally a personal or family matter but when honour is threatened, it automatically becomes a matter for the whole tribe and village. Men who do not kill face social boycott and offensive remarks. As Ameer perceptively explained: 'You cannot mould and fold your system. You need to be part of it and obey and surrender before its norms. You are bound to kill, otherwise people will kill you with their attitude and sharp words'. Even those who might not believe that killing is the proper solution to retain honour cannot stand alone to face the humiliation if they do not kill, so they find refuge in killing and then realise the benefits of the killings. Majid's account of how he was treated after killing emphasises what it is like to live in an honour-based society.

Now I feel honourable. I walk around honourably not cowardly. People respect me. If I had not killed them I would never have been able to live with honour. You know the cruel system, the insulting remarks kill people from within. A person who cannot defend his honour is called a pimp in this society. Now blessings of God are on me that I am saved from these types of comment. I am considered an honourable man by society. I feel fresh. There is no such burden on my head. (Majid, 36)

The killers in this study all belonged to similar family and educational backgrounds and were from the lower economic class. They had limited exposure to the outside world and its opportunities. Most of them had not been out of their village or city. The honour-threatening situation becomes a masculinity challenge for them. Honour-connected matters provided them with opportunities to prove their bravery and skills. Showing aggression and masculine assertiveness, such as reacting violently towards a woman whose moral conduct is objectionable, places men in a privileged group. They feel elevated, as this act makes them notable in their community. Hence, they take full advantage of the respect and admiration from this. Hayat (22) told me, excitedly: 'Everybody was appreciating me. Everybody was praising my act, calling me a hero and a responsible Balochi who had fulfilled his duty in a great manner. People gave my example to the youngsters so that they should follow me and

uphold honour'. Preserving honour is even more important in relation to ties of kinship and the men consider it a duty to pass the concepts of honour on to future generations. This process paves the way for possible future killing. Tarik (29) said that his wife's elder brother was very angry about the killing of his sister to begin with but then he realised the situation and they are friends again. However, the younger brother of his wife continued to say that he will kill Tarik. In response to his threats, Tarik answered him, proudly: 'If you consider the killing of your sister was unjust, kill me; but if you kill me, my children will kill you. I keep asking my children this question, "Your uncle wants to kill me. If he kills me, will you take revenge or not?" They reply confidently, "How long shall we remain children? We shall also grow one day and kill him if he kills you". So my children console me and I am sure that if my brother-in-law kills me, he will also be killed by my children'. This was the only negative reaction that Tarik faced after killing his wife; otherwise he was happy that the rest of the village appreciated him. 'And how old are your children?' I asked. 'My older son is now nine but he looks bigger than his age and talks on these issues like an adult'. Tarik wanted this legacy to be carried on. He was composed about killing his wife for a great cause and content with the knowledge that if he is killed for this killing, his son will kill his father's killer, no matter who the killer is. He was satisfied that at a young age his children understand what honour is and how honour-related matters should be tackled.

It is not only the community but also the police that work according to this fundamental understanding of honour killing and the police's consideration towards honour killers was evident. Tarik (29) said: 'The police did not disturb any of us. Otherwise, you know, the police just need any excuse to enter our houses to find money, gold and other valuable things. But in my case no such thing happened'. He also told me that: 'No policeman came inside my home because they have respect for honour killing cases and, second, they were told by the *waderas* not to touch or harm me'. Every man I interviewed discussed the role of *waderas* and the police. Those who did not go to jail or had been in jail for only a short time were thankful to the *waderas* of their areas and to the police for their cooperation.

Our relatives decided to hide my cousin who had killed them with me, and they took me to the police. I took my rifle and said that I had killed them to save my family's honour. The police asked a few general questions about the situation, murder and other details. Then they locked me up. I was sure that I would be free quite soon as my relatives had already spoken to the area *sardar* and then the police consoled and

assured me that the *wadera* would support me. I faced only nine months' imprisonment. Nine months passed so quickly and I became free with the support of the *wadera*. (Hayat, 22)

The triangle of *wadera*, police and murderers has a very strong role in keeping the tradition of honour killing alive. The role of the area *sardar* is so important that '[e]ven the police of the area ask people to go to the *wadera* to seek justice' (Khan: 2006: 248). Pakistan's law enforcement agencies, including police officials, understand the local concept of honour and local views about women's status to be a source of making money. If bribed, the police do not arrest a murderer or even register a case against him. At the same time, the police take a handsome amount of money from the accused or killed *karo*'s family for registering a case against a killer. Naqvi and Korai (2000: 30) corroborate this: 'The districts of Jacobabad, Sukker and Kashmore [in upper Sindh], the main centres of honour killing, are a major source of generating income for the police. Therefore, the police take no interest in curbing the tradition'. The local system, government officials and all influential people consider killing for honour to be a cultural practice not a crime, thus so do the police. Hina explains how the police protect both the killer and the accepted cultural ways to the point of severe miscarriages of justice.

The police work as a support for the cultural norms instead of carrying out their duty impartially. In many cases, the police take bribes from the murderer and arrest any poor person randomly and present him before the court as a killer.²²⁰ (Hina, 2000: 21-22)

In line with this, the four jailed killers whom I interviewed, who denied killing, had diverse stories about the police's atrocities. According to them, the actual killers are roaming around proudly while they themselves were innocent men who have been locked up for crimes they did not commit. Ghulam (26), who could hardly walk without the help of his walking stick, asked me whether he could kill and run away from the police with only one leg, as was claimed in the report. He alleged that his uncles had paid money to the police to arrest him because he had taken possession from the uncles of a piece of land that he actually owned. He was continuously crying for his old parents, wife and two young children. He complained that the police asked for a bribe but he had no money, so he was behind bars. Similarly, Fayaz (22)

²²⁰ My translation.

burst into tears and swore that he had not killed any one. His hands were shaking, his eyes were full of tears.

The police blamed me, charged me with the murder and tortured me for a week or more. Eventually, they asked for RS100,000 to release me. My family is very poor. We could only arrange about RS25,000 but the police refused to take that amount. They tortured me a lot to confess to the killing but I denied the blame. My father and elder brother came to visit me once a week. The police charge 170 rupees per person to visit a prisoner so even meeting with relatives is also expensive. What else should I tell you? I have not killed anyone. God knows everything. I don't know how long will I be in the jail. (Fayaz, 22)

Zahid (45) also denied killing. It was his thirteenth year in jail of a 25-year sentence. He said he remembered his children and his wife. He was very sad that his children had grown up without his love and wished that no-one should live the life of a prisoner. Zahid had strong grievances against the *waderas*. He strongly denied the killing he had been punished for, rather he complained that he was victimised by the powerful *waderas* for not obeying their unjust demands. Indeed, inside the jails, the men convicted of killing held the *waderas* responsible for their miseries whereas the free killers were grateful to them. It is notable that the *wadera* appears to be the most influential person in the accounts of the men.

It is possible that these men who denied killing were actually murderers who were hiding their killings from me in order to get some legal support or benefit. However, the Pakistani police are notorious for not registering cases of domestic and honour-related violence, and for arresting innocents rather than criminals for material gains. As Khan (2006: 247) makes clear: '[f]inancial corruption and bribery have been salient features of police departments all over Pakistan and these practices are evident in villages, tribes and remote areas where honour-related crimes occur more frequently'.

The Role of *Waderas* in Honour Killings, As Seen by the Men

Faislos are easy, quick, in the village and *waderas* understand our cultural norms and we consider their decisions appropriate. The Pakistani court system is very expensive and takes ages to decide the case. Second, Pakistani law does not understand our honour-related cultural tradition so we prefer *jirgas*. We know what will happen in the *faislo*, as general rules are applied in *jirgas* so the disputed groups always agree upon

the decision. We like it because it is much easier and cheaper justice than the courts and the police. (Hayat, 22)

Hayat had killed his cousin and the man she was caught with. Since killing a *kari* was not a big issue for anyone, there were no worries; but for killing a *karo* he needed a *faislo* to be able to move without any fear of being the object of revenge. The *sardars* not only helped him to be freed from jail but also did the *khair* and he was safe after paying some money to the *jirga*. Reaching courts and hiring lawyers are also huge barriers for the uneducated and financially deprived families of victims. Shaikh (2000: 62) explains that ‘for registering a case of honour killing, the police ask a very handsome amount like about RS100,000 from a *karo*’s family’.²²¹ Therefore the easiest solution for the local people is the customary legal system which ‘is a centuries-old mixture of cultural, economic, social and religious beliefs’ (Khan, 2006: 236). As discussed in Chapter Two, the rules, regulations and judgments of the *jirgas* reflect local gender norms, including men’s control over their women’s moral conduct and the belief in women’s lower status, as well as respect for the tribal and feudal system. Moreover, the crimes committed in the name of honour are viewed positively and are settled in the best interests of the opposing parties so the system is more acceptable for the inhabitants of upper Sindh. In fact, the *wadera* was a great support for the killers, as Yaseen (37) explained: ‘My village is adjacent to that of the boy’s family [whom he had killed along with his female cousin] so a strong reaction was expected from his family. Therefore, I left Sindh for Baluchistan and stayed there for twelve days. Meanwhile, my family members contacted the *sardar* of our area. The *sardar* had a talk with the area police officer and then instructed me to hand myself over to the police so I did so’. I interjected to be sure of his meaning: ‘You had so much confidence in the *sardar* that upon his assurance you were ready to be arrested?’

Oh yes, I still have. The *sardars* are men of their word. A *sardar* is honourable so the people also listen to him and cannot deny what he says or decides. On the assurance of the *wadera* as soon as I reached Sindh, the police officer came and took me to jail. Later I was presented before the court. The judge asked me some questions. I denied the killings and said that I was not there on the day when the killing happened. Then, there were some legal procedures and formalities. I was set free within a couple of days. The following week there was a *faisla* before the *sardar*. I clearly said that their boy was a *karo* and therefore I had murdered him. Actually there are various systems or processes²²² that determine whether it was a *karo-kari* or some personal gain or a

²²¹ My translation.

²²² Sometimes the *sardar* orders the most pious person from the killer’s family to take an oath that the killings are justified, that they happened because of *karo-kari* and no other issue was involved. The trials are various.

dispute. My father was taken to a shrine and swore on the holy book that the boy was a *karo*. The *sardar* was very angry at the slain boy's family and clearly said that whether he was a *karo* or not, they should forget about him. The *wadera* was so angry and called the killing a *haque*²²³ and declared me innocent. (Yaseen, 37)

The killers were well aware of the dominant role of the *waderas*. The influential role of a *wadera* is idealised by the murderers as a *wadera* treats honour as a great virtue, and killers as the bearers of the rich tradition of saving honour. Doud Pota (2000: 75) explained: 'The *waderas* play a key role in increasing honour killings. They do not want the police to be involved in honour killing cases as they consider such killings to be their internal tribal matter'.²²⁴ There is a consensus among researchers of *karo-kari* that the police have sympathy with the killers and try not to register a case against them by calling the murders 'an internal matter of morality' (Ahmed, 2000: 78). Furthermore, many of the *waderas* are government ministers and Members of Parliament so the police do not want to go against them. As a result, the police benefit from the system and take bribes from both sides, both from a killed *karo*'s family to register a case against the killers and from the killer and his family for not registering a case against him. The whole system favours to the tradition of honour killing, as Shaikh (2000: 62) explains: 'The administration, judiciary and rights activists seem helpless before the *jirgas* arranged by the *sardars*'.²²⁵ Ameer explained this situation, with much feeling.

Who can challenge a *sardar*'s *faislo* [decision]? Who can dare not to change his statement before the court when the area *sardar* takes a decision? *Waderas*' words are the final authority. The tribal leaders and *sardars* are the kings of their areas. No one can afford to disagree with their decisions. You know if one disagrees or refuses to accept the *sardar*'s decision, then, next time when he gets into some trouble the *sardar* will not come forward to help him. In our social system, in villages, you know, all the time you are in trouble. Sometimes a land dispute, sometimes personal enmity, sometimes tribal hostility, I mean you are always threatened by a number of troubles so in this situation who can afford the hostility of the area *sardar*? (Ameer, 38)

Sometimes to justify innocence, the *sardar* orders one of the family members (the most religious, who takes responsibility for the killer) to walk on burning coals in a trench. If he crosses through and his feet are not burned, the killer is considered innocent. Or the person is taken to any mosque or a shrine to take an oath that the killings are *haque* and are due to *karo-kari*.

²²³ *Haque* means 'a right thing'. In the case of honour killing, the word refers to a situation in which a man murders a couple committing adultery, and there was no other enmity involved.

²²⁴ My translation.

²²⁵ My translation.

Shaikh (2000: 62) states that all over Sindh the *waderas* have their own specific jurisdiction and that no *wadera* interferes in the jurisdiction of another *wadera*. If one does, a bloody massacre begins. A *wadera* as a tribal chief rules his own fiefdom to the local population. He definitely appears superior to the legal courts and the law enforcement agencies. Khan (2006: 233) suggests that the tribal courts flourish with the blessing of the local police and that the civil administration is happy for the crimes not to be put on the record. Tarik described how the *sardar* supported him when he went to the police after killing his wife.

The *sardar* of the area came as soon as I went to the police. He listened to me carefully, consoled me and said, ‘Don’t cry over spilt milk. God is great and he understands your intentions, that you killed them for saving Islamic tradition, so God will help you’. He said to the police not to lock me up and he took responsibility for me. The police agreed and arranged a *charpaee* for me outside the lock-up. I slept there. (Tarik, 29)

So even in police custody, an honour killer is elevated on the orders of the *wadera*. The villagers envy this respect. Pirzado (1988) illustrates honour killers’ confident views: ‘So what if we are arrested and go to jail? We are not hanged for killing a *kari*’. A killer knows that he will not be hanged for killing anyone in the name of honour. Majid described how, despite being completely open about having killed his wife and the man she was found with, he remained safe with the help of *wadera*.

Surely I felt fear that I might go to jail, the opposing party [the family of the boy whom he had killed] being very strong would surely work hard to put me behind bars ... And if I was arrested by the police I would either face life imprisonment or a death sentence. And from jail I may not be in a position to ask support and help from the *sardar*. So I went straight to the *sardar* in the morning soon after the killing and admitted it before the *sardar*. I said I had killed my wife with a man and I did *haque*. The *sardar* asked me to recite the first *kalima*²²⁶ and to take an oath. I did so. In the end I was asked to take the Qur’an and, holding the Qur’an, I said that I had witnessed the immorality and then killed the two in *karo-kari*. The *sardar* said that he would call the other party [the killed men’s relatives] and the matter would be decided in a *jirga*. They were called. The date of the *jirga* was decided. The *jirga* was conducted. They were found guilty and I was found to be in the right so the *faisla* was in my favour. (Majid, 36)

²²⁶ In Arabic, the word *kalima* means a sentence. There are altogether six *kalimas* in Islam to facilitate the easy memorizing and learning of the basic fundamentals of a Muslim’s *Aqeedah* (beliefs). *Kalimas* are called the first pillar of Islam. The first of them is known as the *kalimat at-taiyibah* or ‘word of purity’.

The *jirga* system has been declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.²²⁷ The verdict on the *jirga* system says, ‘Such illegal practices being carried out in different parts of the country with impunity violate the state laws and fundamental rights of its citizens and also jeopardise the state’s position with regard to international treaties to which Pakistan is a signatory’ (Khan & Khan, 2012).²²⁸ Nevertheless the uninterrupted continuity of the *jirga* system is clear evidence of the powerlessness of state power over tribal power. Besides, as clarified by Khan (2006: 233), the feudal lords, politicians, police officers, the bureaucracy and parliamentarians all join hands to keep the tribal justice system alive and flourishing. This is because all these entities collectively and individually benefit from such a system. The losers and sufferers are the women who have no representation in the *jirga* council and, moreover, do not even have access to the *jirga* to make their plea.

When I asked about the involvement of money in the *jirgas*, the men admitted it was a reality but no-one told me the exact figure involved their specific case. The *wadera* to whom I spoke when collecting my data in upper Sindh did not deny that money is taken by the *waderas* in *faislo* but he said that this was done so as to pay for both groups to have food and lodging. However, Doud Pota (2006: 75) claims that: ‘the money received in a *faislo* is distributed equally between the *wadera* and the legal relative(s) of the *kari*. For the *waderas*, the tradition is a source of income. If honour killings were curbed, the *waderas* would lose a considerable sum.’²²⁹ Nonetheless, whether the killers were in jail or outside, the *wadera* was at the centre of their stories, and whatever the situation, the *wadera* was held responsible.

Anees (34) and Zahid (45) had been jailed for life although they claimed not to have killed anyone. Zahid said he had been in the fields that day when he heard that his brother had run away after killing his wife. He reached home and saw the dead bodies of a man and his sister-

²²⁷ The Supreme Court’s three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in its verdict on 24 April 2006, asked the federal and provincial governments to ensure that people were protected against highhandedness by implementing the court’s previous judgments and relevant laws that discouraged the *jirga* system. Under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2005, section 310A was inserted into the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the custom of giving women for the sake of peace was declared a crime. That section has now been replaced by the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act of 2011 (Iqbal: 2013).

²²⁸ A two-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, heard the petition filed by National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW). Chairperson Anis Haroon called the *jirga* system illegal, unlawful and against the canons of law, and she urged that it should be prohibited and stopped immediately (Khan & Khan, *The Express Tribune*, 17 March 2012).

²²⁹ My translation.

in-law. Soon the police came with the local *wadera* and the *wadera* said that he had witnessed Zahid killing the two people.

The police arrested my father and me and did not let me say anything. The police also took fifteen of our neighbours' buffalo that were at our house as I used to take the buffalo to graze in the forest. In the lock up, the SHO²³⁰ demanded money and promised that upon being given the required money he would let us and our cattle go free. We provided RS70,000 to the SHO and my father, the buffalo and I were freed. After paying the money, I thought that my troubles were over but I was unaware of the depth of the conspiracy. The police again arrested me and this time there was no possibility of paying to be freed. The police officer told me that the area landlord had put pressure on them to make a strong case against me so that I should not come out of the jail. I admitted the murder because I was subjected to third degree torture by the police but, when the case was presented before the court, I denied it. Since the police report was strong and it had included the statement of the *wadera* in which he mentioned that he had witnessed the murders, nobody listened to me. So I was sentenced to life imprisonment on the charges of double murder due to the conspiracy of the landowners of my area. My father died as he could not endure the troubles. This allegation and jail experience threw me into a world of great poverty, pain and debt. (Zahid, 45)

'What was the reason for the enmity of the *wadera*?' I asked. Zahid's reply was straightforward.

The *waderas* have big egos. They think that all the villagers are their slaves and should work for them unconditionally. I twice refused to work on the *wadera*'s land because I needed to provide both bread and education for my children. Also, my younger brothers were studying so that was not an acceptable thing for them to do. *Waderas* do hold these grievances in their hearts and wait for the right time to show their supremacy over the poverty-stricken and helpless people like us. These are very old tactics used to pressurise and harass the villagers. (Zahid, 45)

A variety of issues, such as poverty, illiteracy, unrest and hostility among various tribes, and respect for honour killings, ensure that the *waderas* are unopposed. Moreover, they do not want anyone to challenge their unrestricted powers so these landowners do not want education in villages, as education might open opportunities for employment and then the people might not work like slaves for the *waderas*.

²³⁰ Station House Officer.

Anees (34), who denied killing his wife, also blamed a *wadera* of his village for his arrest and imprisonment.

There was a conflict between the *wadera* and my family because my father wanted his sons to be educated, which was not acceptable to the *wadera*. Consequently, he used to create problems for us. Then he blamed my nephew for stealing his cow. We paid him some money although my nephew was innocent. Next he blamed my brothers for theft and had them arrested. So when he heard that I had joined the army, he could not tolerate it. He might have thought that with the support of the army I might be able to fight back so he decided to kill my wife and get me arrested so no-one in my family would be strong enough to fight him. Thus, he showed his power. These things are very common in Sindh. The *waderas* of Sindh behave like gods. They cannot bear to see anyone having a better life. (Anees, 34)

These tribal leaders do not want people to progress. To achieve their goal they weave intrigues and conspiracies to uphold their authority. They deliberately keep people ignorant. The poverty-stricken villages have no clean water systems, proper medical facilities, suitable houses or roads but every village has a huge house belonging to the *wadera* with all the luxuries and expensive vehicles. His children go abroad to study and the government schools of the villages are made into cowsheds for the *wadera's* cattle. He has a number of servants to serve him and his family. On his large fields can be seen hundreds of barefoot workers, including women and children as young as four or five in rags, working under scorching heat. The peasants work day and night from birth to death but cannot pay off their debts to the *wadera*. So how can the *waderas* relinquish their immense power by letting people acquire education and realise their rights? Men are kept in poverty and slavery and learn to measure their level of their honour by killing their helpless women. And these killings in the name of tradition directly favour the landowners.

For instance, Ameer (38) killed his male cousin whom he believed was in love with his sister. When I asked what happened to his sister, he stopped for a moment and appeared a little upset. Then he replied in a broken voice: 'She is not with us. She was given to the *sardar* and *sardar* ... gave her in marriage ... to someone ... in a faraway village'. My next question was: 'So she was given to the *sardar* as she was declared a *kari*?' He just nodded his head and said: 'Yes'. I then asked, cautiously: 'How did she go to the *haveli*, I mean who took her there?' Ameer replied: 'As soon as I had killed the boy, the news spread all around the village. It was

understood that she would be killed so she ran and took *panah*²³¹ at the *haveli* of the *sardar* as *sam*²³² and later the *sardar* gave her in marriage'. 'Where?' I felt I needed to know the fate of that girl who had been fourteen years old at that time. Ameer now seemed more collected and spoke boldly.

The *waderas* do not tell people or the relatives of the *karis*. Once declared *kari* she should be killed but if she escapes from killing for some reason, then it becomes the business of the *sardar* and he is the responsible for her. *Sardars* do not tell anyone where, in which tribe, or to whom these *karis* are given in marriage ... I mean, we then consider a *kari* a dead person and do not discuss her at home at all. As a cultural taboo we cannot keep any relationship with these *karis* and the *karis* also have no right to contact us. (Ameer, 38)

My next question was 'How much money did you receive for her?' 'Nothing ... not anything' he said. I then asked: 'For how much money did the *sardar* sell her?' Ameer promptly replied, 'I don't know. This is only known to the *sardar*. I have no idea'. The feudal lords make money by selling the accused women. Shaikh (2000: 62) discussed how much of the amount, called *chattee*²³³, goes to the *wadera* only, or if others also have their share: '*Waderas* take the lion's share from the money given by the *karo*'s family. Some amount goes to the police for their loyalty and sometimes the relatives of the *kari* also receive a share'.²³⁴ Once a woman has been accused, she loses her natal as well as her affinal relatives. She is no longer a daughter, sister, wife or a mother. She is destined to be killed or to be sold to anyone for any purpose by the *wadera*. Thus, an accusation, whether true or false, can put a woman in complete isolation with no redress. However, the end of *karo-kari* would mean the end of the unrestricted influence of *waderas* who seem to receive the maximum benefits from this system.

²³¹ Shelter.

²³² *Sam* is a very respectful word in the Sindhi language because a number of folk sayings and tales are associated with it. Its metaphorical meaning is to provide shelter to a weaker person and not hand him/her to his/her enemies, whatever the consequences, or to keep somebody's precious thing with care for some time. However, in today's context of honour killing, Shah (2004: 46) suggests that 'In fact, *sam* means keeping a slave. A *wadera* has a complete authority over the *sam* woman'. Doud Poto (2000: 75) explains: 'The *karis* who reach the *havelies* by any means are misused by the *sardars*, their sons and other relatives'.

²³³ A fine (Khan, 206: 180).

²³⁴ My translation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted how honour killing as a cultural practice combines to be accepted by all the major segments of the society. My interviewees' narrations showed that only one of the male interviewees could think of any other option apart from killing in honour-related issues because of the cultural and traditional boundaries. Their concept of honour is associated with the strict moral conduct expected of their women. The men justified their supremacy, their rights over the women and their zero tolerance for women with references to religion and traditional proverbs. Killing a wayward woman is an honourable deed that not only restores the killers' lost honour but also gives them extra respect in their society. A killer is more admired than an ordinary man.

Numerous cultural, tribal and religious commentaries and explanations provide a rationale to honour killers and therefore the tradition of killing to save honour is continued with the support of all segments of this region, including the police and the judiciary. Upper Sindh appears to be a distinct part of the country where multiple tribal fiefdoms are functioning under the orders of powerful *waderas* and thus the whole machinery of the state government seems helpless. The men's stories of violence demonstrate that the co-ordination and co-existence of the legal administration and the *waderas* are responsible for the present state of the extreme violence in the villages. In addition to that, the deliberate negligence of the police worsens the situation. As Khan (2000: 284) suggests: '[v]iolent customs and the code of the honour/shame schema are implicitly and explicitly upheld by the economically determined social system, endorsed by religion, confirmed by law and facilitated by the state institutions'.

Men who are deprived of the basic necessities of life, education and chances of better employment are destined to live in a sphere where honour killing provides them with an opportunity to appear a little more important and respected. Instead of being considered as crimes, honour killings are valued as a source of pride by the tribal lords as it serves their economic interests. Furthermore, providing relief to the killers, the *jirgas* serve two purposes for the *waderas*: on the one hand, the killers remain their faithful devotees and, on the other, other villagers become aware of the advantages of honour killing and are also encouraged to kill; so the violent culture is continued. However, this is not the only purpose of the *jirgas*. If these women, who have no voice or opportunity to clarify their position once they are labelled

as *kari*, manage to escape death, the *waderas* become the masters of their destiny and can earn money by selling them. Hence these *jirgas* are generating income not only by selling the *kari* women but also from the families of the accused persons to guarantee their lives. The *waderas*' traditional ancestral illegal judicial system has successfully turned the tradition of homicides in their favour. However, the accounts of those alleged killers who denied killing maintain that the arrogant lords used various tactics to punish those villagers who did not surrender before their unlawful orders and instead aspired to education or better job options. Thus, the continuity of honour killing serves the interests of these lords at many levels.

Chapter Six: Women's Stories of Accusations

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall discuss the women's stories of violent abuse in their social context so as to demonstrate how and why they have been threatened with death and what they have faced in striving to save their lives. My aim is fourfold: to discover what factors contributed to each woman becoming targeted as a *kari*; what impact the accusation had on their lives; what the objectives behind the allegations were; and who gained through the overall situation. The overall purpose of this chapter is to make the voices of the women available to the world through an exploration of how they see male dominance, honour-related allegations and killings, and their survival under unfavourable circumstances.

On the basis of the accounts of the women I interviewed in the state-run *darulamans*, I shall explain how these disadvantaged women had no means to defend themselves once they were called *karis*, irrespective of the accuracy of the accusation. Moreover, although each woman was falsely accused they all had very little social support on top of the financial and social dynamics that kept them powerless. I shall examine the diverse circumstances in which the women faced death threats, how they managed to escape and the obstacles which they faced to reach the shelters in order to save their lives.

Following this, through their narratives, I shall investigate the gender-biased legal, judicial and political structures that made it impossible for the women to obtain appropriate redress, as well as describing their existing situation, their expectations for the future and their very limited choices in terms of seeking a safe and better life. Finally, I shall discuss the involvement of the *sardars* and *waderas* in the lives of these women and how they suffered as a result of the *jirga* system, in which women have no right to participate. Throughout the chapter, I shall discuss women's perceptions of men's interests behind the accusations and killings.

Becoming a *Kari*

Men's version of honour killing was that they gathered evidence, caught the guilty men and women red-handed and then killed the offenders in accordance with their cultural and religious beliefs, whereas the stories of the women survivors provide a different picture of accusations and killings in the name of honour. Most of the female survivors saw 'honour' as an instrument to be used to conceal more concrete objectives of men, as seen in the case of Shahadat (30), who was involved in a dispute with her brother-in-law over a piece of land for about seven years. She told me that her father-in-law, who had two sons from his two wives, left seven acres of land to both of his sons. Her husband's stepbrother took the larger and better piece of the land and gave them the barren part, which was far away from Shahadat's house and was not sufficient to fulfil the needs of their family.

One day in the late afternoon, I was feeling very sick so I called my niece, who lived next door, to prepare tea for my children while I lay on a *charpae*. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise from outside. I assumed that my father and uncles were having an argument, so I stood up on the *charpae* and tried to look over to the other side of the wall. What I saw was that my brother and *dair*²³⁵ were loudly calling out my name as 'Shahadat *kari*, Shahadat *kari*' and rushing towards my house. My *dair* entered and tried to shoot me but God knows best why the pistol did not work ... whether its trigger was jammed or it had no bullets ... I don't know. I also shouted that I was sitting here with my children, niece and my husband was at home, how have I been a *kari*? (Shahadat, 30)

Shocked, Shahadat had no other option except to cry and scream to let the people around her know that the accusation was a lie, yet she knew that denying her brother and *dair* would be very difficult. Shahadat, however, clearly comprehended why she had been accused.

My brother and brother-in-law had killed a young boy of about eighteen years of age. In fact, they had borrowed a handsome amount of money from him. On that day, my brother-in-law phoned the boy and told him to come and collect his money. When the boy arrived on his bike, they took him to their *otaque* and killed him. Then they came to kill me to give the impression that the killings were a *karo-kari*. God knows the truth; I do not know who the unlucky child was. (Shahadat, 30)

Shahadat believed that the allegations about her and the murder of the young man were part of a planned scheme that would benefit her brother and brother-in-law in a number of ways. Her

²³⁵ Husband's brother (brother-in-law).

murder would have made her brother-in-law the owner of the piece of cultivated land that was given to her husband by her father-in-law. In addition, her murder would have proved that the slain man was a *karo* and as a result his relatives would not have dared to ask to have the loan returned. In addition, her brother and brother-in-law would have benefitted when questioned in *jirga* because in the tribal justice system, a *kari*'s family has to be compensated by the relatives of the *karo*. This type of situation is defined by Farooquie (2000: 17) as happening according to the following pattern: 'The news that a male member of the family has killed a man somewhere terrifies the women because after killing someone the man rushes back to his house to kill the first available woman and throws her dead body near the killed man to show that it was an honour killing.'²³⁶ Tears were rolling down Shahadat's face as she spoke. However, her story demonstrated yet another aspect of the multi-faceted tradition of honour killing.

I had been saved from one death but the worst death was still ahead. The killed boy's influential relatives reported the murder to the police and the police arrested my brother whereas my brother-in-law escaped. My father came to me in this [women's] shelter and asked me to admit before the judge that I was a *kari* so that my brother should not face the murder charges. Now, once I am out of the shelter, my father will sell me in order to prove that his daughter was a *kari* ...to save his son's life. (Shahadat, 30)

Shahadat's first error was to speak up for her family's rights to take the property back from her brother-in-law. It is not acceptable for a woman to speak up for her (or her children's) rights in a patriarchal system and if one does try to make a stand, men feel they have to demonstrate their power to control her. Her second failing was that she had not been killed by her brother-in-law because of some technical fault with the pistol and so the two men could not prove that the killing of the young man was an honour killing. It is commonly known in northern Sindh that the penalty for honour killing is not death but a nominal imprisonment so Shahadat's father wanted her to admit in court that she was a *kari* so that his son would be released from jail and not face trial for murder. Sons' lives are very precious in this culture and daughters are expected to do as directed in order to save men's lives. Yet, once a woman is accused of being a *kari* by a kinsman, she remains at the mercy of the system.

²³⁶ My translation.

One after another, my female participants told me the concealed stories behind the allegations. Moomal (18), who was denounced as a *kari* by her brother-in-law explained.

Once, I was hanging out the laundry. You know the open houses in the villages. One could easily see everything over the small fences. Believe me ... I do not know whose car passed outside our house but soon after it went by, my brother-in-law entered and howled that the *Syed* was in the car and I had given him a smile. I took oaths that I was innocent but he beat me heartlessly and said to my husband that his wife was a *kari*. (Moomal, 18)

Every gesture a woman makes is examined, observed and judged by her male family members who can accuse her of being a *kari* whenever they want. Hina (2000: 22) rightly states that the sphere of honour in this region is not limited to a woman's sexual conduct but its domain is infinite. From her bodily movements to her everyday communication, a woman is scrutinised according to the parameters of honour. If her laughter or smile seemingly breaches this abstract notion of honour, men waste no time in accusing or killing her as a *kari*.²³⁷ Yet, nowadays, even if women act according to the traditionally assigned customs, they are still not sure whether they will escape from being called a *kari*. Moomal, who had not broken any honour-related codes, explained her understanding of the allegations.

My in-laws worked for a *Syed* landlord and had borrowed money from the *Syed*. I don't know how much but my in-laws often spoke about it and used abusive language towards the *Syed*. They were in fact jealous of the *Syed's* wealth. When my brother-in-law accused me of being a *kari* with the *Syed*, whom I had not seen, I cried and wept and insisted that I was not a *kari*. Even my husband did not support me. They all became united in order to kill me as a *kari* to get hold of the *Syed's* money by calling him a *karo*. You know, they took RS720,000 from the *Syed*, the largest amount ever taken from a *karo*.

Moomal's story was simple and clear, and it can be comprehended through what Khan (2007: 63) explained about the construction of honour killing: 'such a crime needs an 'adulterous, immoral, disobedient' woman and an 'honourable and brave' man who is a close relative of the woman'. Therefore, to serve whatever motives may be salient, the perpetrators have to construct an honour-threatening situation in which two equally unwanted people of opposite sex should be present, as Moomal described happening to her. Moomal knew the reality but was helpless before the powerful men of her family, as were the other women in the shelters.

²³⁷ My translation.

The involvement of financial or material gain was apparent in numerous cases, but in the case of Nayab (22), the sister of five brothers, it was undeniably obvious.

I wore the lovely pair of gold earrings my husband had bought for me and I attended a marriage party in my mother's neighbourhood. When I left the wedding, I gave the earrings to my mother who kept them in her box and we slept. Around 3am, my elder brother started shouting that he saw a man in the house. We all woke up, switched on lights but could not trace anything except the broken latches of my mother's box and found that my earrings had been stolen. Soon afterwards, the secret was disclosed as the goldsmith to whom my brother sold my earrings told my husband about it on condition that his name remained a secret. Being very disheartened, I went to my mother, who asked me to be silent and not to fight with my brothers, but I argued with my brothers. That night, after the quarrel, I slept at my mother's house. In the middle of the night, my elder brother arrived holding a torch and shouted that he saw a man coming out of the room in which I was asleep with my sister and her two young children. He called me a *kari* and said that the man had come for me. I did not know that my brother could go to that extreme. I simply denied this allegation but before that dawn, my five brothers jointly called me a *kari*. (Nayab 22)

Having a pair of gold earrings is not an ordinary thing; it is a matter of pride in the rural culture where the majority live below the poverty line. Women feel a deep attachment to their jewellery, if they have any. The mother's warning showed her understanding of the culture and her expected reaction from the menfolk. Nayab asked for justice and as a result she was denounced as a *kari*. Her brothers being united became powerful. This kind of situation is elaborated by Farooqui (2000: 13): 'The men automatically become honourable and virtuous as soon as they call their kinswoman a *kari* and the women inevitably become adulterous, immoral and infidel, as soon as they are accused of being *karis*'.²³⁸ Nayab (22) said: 'It hardly took a few hours and before that dawn I was a *kari*. My sisters and mother could not do anything for me'.

The reality in fact is that my brothers were in debt with their business partner. This business partner was owed RS20,000 by my brothers. A few days before they accused me, the business partner had asked my brothers to return the loan. During the argument, they went wild and hit each other. My brothers wanted to teach him a lesson. Since they already had grievances with me, they felt it was a good opportunity to accuse me of being a *kari* with their business partner. (Nayab 22)

²³⁸ My translation.

Nayab actually challenged her brothers' power, which was a threat to their manhood. They could not tolerate this. Simultaneously, they had damaged their relationship with their business partner. Thus, it was a useful time to benefit from creating such a situation. Nayab said: 'You know any woman can be called *kari* if her husband, father or brother is in debt. We have no redress; our lives are at the mercy of this structure controlled by these men'. Moreover, Nayab's brothers will have understood that by killing Nayab as *kari*, they would benefit from the *karo* (the business partner). However, an accused couple is far more profitable because the accusers would then benefit from both the *karo* and the *kari* when the latter is sold. Nayab was sure she would be sold eventually. Thus, instead of killing the accused couple on the spot, a common element of these accounts is the practice of accusing the couple and letting them survive for a certain period until the *faislo* is decided in *jirga*.

Noori (48), who had diabetes, told me: 'My husband sent me to my brothers' home. The next morning, he phoned one of my brothers and said: 'She is a *kari* so I will not keep her. You kill her otherwise I will kill her''. The sudden unexpected accusation made her realize there was a hidden conspiracy behind the false charge but she had no hope of justice. She knew the reason why she was accused as *kari*.

Is it because of my age and time that I'm denounced as a *kari*? I'm diabetic. My rotten teeth are falling out because I have no medicine but my husband has accused me of being a *kari* with a young innocent boy of my son's age, just to get rid of me. He had made a *faislo* with the boy's family that wanted to save their young man so they paid my husband RS300,000. Look at the cleverness, how cleverly he got rid of me and made money. Actually, my husband wanted to marry the woman of his choice and by accusing me, he has served all his purposes. (Noori, 48)

Noori was sick and old so she was a liability. Getting rid of aged, unwanted, and sick wives by calling them *kari* has also been discussed by Hyder (2000: 36): 'Whenever a man wants a new woman, he calls his wife a *kari* with any man. Thus, to save his life, the accused man pays money and a mature girl or two young girls in a *jirga*. This is tribal justice'.²³⁹ In this society, older women cannot be suitable sex objects and therefore they have no value. Younger women have value because they can be sold for some purpose whereas no one would buy elderly women. In this context the situation is not different from the Western perspective explained by Lindsey *et al.* (2009: 131) that: 'one clear manifestation of the power of the patriarchy to

²³⁹ My translation.

demonstrate male dominance over women is the treatment of women as sex objects'. Young women such as Moomal (18), Shabana (18), Nayab (22) and Nazia (26) although accused, had a right to survive as they could be sold and so their kinsmen and the *waderas* were interested in keeping them alive. However, neither the *wadera* nor the kinsmen of the older women seem interested in keeping middle-aged women alive.²⁴⁰ Forty-eight years old, Noori was wiping away her tears with her *dupatta* when she replied: 'We women are the source of money for our money-mongering, greedy parents and in-laws. I know my destiny but my pain is that the life of an innocent poor boy is at risk, although I have never seen him'. Noori was one of several women in the shelters who had not seen the man whom they were accused of being *kari* with and similar to other women's feelings she had sympathy for the innocent person.

The stories had strongly knitted plots with the main accused characters being placed in honour-compromising situations and threatened with death. However, to my surprise, Anjum (27) angrily asked the following question: 'Is it necessary to have a *karo* in hand? Our dishonoured men can produce many *karos* at once. Any innocent man can be picked and killed or accused as a *karo*. Creating *karos* has never been an issue in Sindh'. Anjum could not stop her tears when she recalled the night when she was asleep with her husband on the same *charpae*. She heard some strange noises from outside so she asked her husband to check. They saw a shadow on the veranda, near their cow. He then took his rifle and fired. The bullet hit the man's leg. However, the man, with the help of three companions waiting outside, managed to escape. Since the police point was near their house, the police heard the shot, and came and arrested her husband. Amid sobbing, Anjum cried loudly and continued.

The man broke into my house for burglary but when the police arrested my husband, he shouted that he was innocent and that the man had come in because of me. I cannot believe how all of a sudden, my husband began shouting that I was a *kari* and tried to shoot me before the police arrested him. (Anjum, 27)

²⁴⁰ The reason why some accused women cannot be sold is discussed by Khan (2006: 181); perhaps they are not pretty, or they are handicapped or have bad health. Khan further discusses the future of such women that they turn to the feudal lords of the village and ask to live in their homes, where they pledge to serve their families for the rest of their lives. The landlord normally accepts their requests because such women are source of physical and sexual services. Some of these accused women, while living in the *haveli* of the lord, bear their children, but because they are illegitimate these children cannot bear the feudal lord's name and are denied a share in the property (Khan, 2006: 181).

Killing a kinswoman in the name of honour is considered an internal matter of the family so no-one, including the law enforcement agencies, takes it seriously. But the men are well aware that they cannot easily get away with the simple murder of a man. Anjum's husband had attempted to kill a man and he knew that he would be treated as a suspect by the law of the country. In addition to that, the burglar he had attempted to shoot would become his enemy. In such conditions, the enmity between individuals cannot be resolved easily. In most cases, their families and then tribes might become involved in the situation. The tribes may stay enemies for a long time with a strong possibility of bloodshed from both sides. So to escape the expected situations, and to save his life, he tried to turn the situation into a case of *karo-kari*. Moreover, Anjum explained that her husband had never been happy with her and this is what actually made him go against her.

My husband hated me because he wanted to marry another woman. He never financed my children and me. Being a righteous woman,²⁴¹ I did not complain to anyone but accepted his supremacy as God's wish. I laboured and provided food to my children. I did not give him any cause to kick me out. But, look at my destiny; the burglar broke into my house and gave my husband a golden opportunity to get rid of me by calling me a *kari* with a thief whom I have never seen. (Anjum, 27)

Hanmer (1996: 8-9), when discussing how women's perceptions and definitions of violence differ greatly from those of men, states: 'For women, violence includes emotional, sexual and physical forms, including threat' but many women of northern Sindh have accepted such violent behaviour as a natural attitude of men. They believe that men are religiously authorized to behave violently and that, as women, their role is to be submissive and to obey their men so as to become righteous women. Anjum sustained not only emotional, sexual, physical and verbal violence but also financial abuse which forced her to remain under the roof provided by her husband. Yet, despite all her efforts and struggle, she ended up as *kari*. Khan (2007: 225) comments that the 'mis/applications of religious dictates and customary laws in an interchangeable manner' have had a disastrous impact on the lives of women in these communities. From family to cultural violence, whatever happens to women religion is used to deny them their human rights. Islam defines men as the protectors and breadwinners

²⁴¹ The Qur'an gives a detailed description of an ideal woman: 'Therefore, the righteous women are devotedly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard (Qur'an, 4: 34). Muslim scholars (men) interpret the verses of the Qur'an so as to institutionalise the image of Muslim women. For instance, Imam Ghazali (1058: 111), one of the most renowned and widely read Muslim scholars, explains the behaviour of an ideal woman in the following words, 'One who remains in her private quarter and never neglects her spindle'.

but in real life, even if the men cannot fulfil these duties, religiously and traditionally women are expected to be obedient, gentle and righteous. The economically deprived women have to tolerate all types of abuse and violence while firmly believing that behind these accusations and murders, men's personal interests are being served. Indeed, the men seem to be cleverly manipulating the historically and socially entrenched concept of honour for material advantage.

Women Speaking against Injustice

Whilst the act of honour killing is itself an extreme form of violence, it became clear from the women's stories that honour was no longer the motivation for the violence they had endured. By drawing on the individual women's stories, my data suggest that honour killing may have evolved into something even more oppressive than in the past. These killings are often motivated by financial gains as Khalid (2013) suggests: 'In northern Sindh, the practice of honour killing is known as *karo-kari* that means *karobari*'.²⁴² In particular, I shall explore how the discrepancies between their experience and traditional values have led them to appeal to the traditional practice of instant killing.

Where is honour in selling a helpless woman? Where is honour in killing an innocent woman? Where is honour in calling *kari* to a *garhee* women? Young infants' mothers are being killed and sold to the vultures and the businessmen who profit from this are called honourable. In the name of honour they do even worse business than a pimp does. A pimp sells others' daughters and calls himself a pimp. Our men do worse than that as they sell their own daughters, sisters and wives and call themselves honourable. (Shahadat, 30)²⁴³

When listening to Shahadat, I was shocked to hear the word 'pimp', the most derogatory word used to degrade a man in Pakistani culture. Using it in relation to her kinsmen implied a profound hatred. It was highly unusual for me to hear the word from this woman in a shelter who had no security in life. However, later on I interviewed other female participants who also

²⁴² A business deal.

²⁴³ Two parallel traditions characteristic of rural Sindh; male domination and feudal domination. Due to the latter, many poor peasants normally live under a huge debt and due to the interest system (an un-Islamic but culturally accepted practice) they can never get out of it. Consequently, they sell off their daughters for very little money and in most of the cases remain unaware of their daughters' destiny. In a number of cases, poor peasants' daughters are kidnapped or raped by landowners and other powerful people (Sultana, 2000: 50). My translation.

called their kinsmen pimps. Shahadat had saved herself from being killed by her brother and brother-in-law. However, her father attempted to force her to admit in front of the judge that she was a *kari* so that her case should be treated as an honour killing and, instead of being seen as a killer, her brother would be considered innocent in law and quickly released from jail. Shahadat kept crying when I interviewed her and said: 'A daughter has no rights, no family and no home in Sindhi society. Families raise their daughters to sacrifice them to save their precious sons'. The reality of this made Shahadat deeply concerned: 'you will see – these wicked people will sell me somewhere. My weak bones are unable to bear physical and sexual cruelty'. Her expected future made her distressed and yet there was no rescue, no remedy and no solution to change the situation for the better.

Being sold into marriage, women do not necessarily die; often, they survive such violence but their lives become a living hell. They may have to live out their lives suffering from physical disfigurement, social stigma and even the hatred of their own family. In such situations they live, eat and sleep violence. (Khan, 2006: 284)

Violence against women is a global problem. In some countries where violence is endemic, women can escape at least theoretically. For example, as revealed in a study of sexual violence conducted in districts of Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2000, 'girls and women, especially those who are living in poverty, tolerated sexual violence and discrimination to a surprising degree', the reason being that, in most of the cases, there is no alternative except to bear such violence (Amnesty International, 2001: 38).

Many women in this situation tolerate sexual violence until they are threatened with death and pushed to the last resort – to run away or commit suicide. For example, Fatima (55) said that her husband hit her genitalia with a stick and slippers when she could not have intercourse due to suffering from Parkinson's disease. She spoke furiously: 'Is it honour to torture a wife and degrade her by calling her a *kari* because she is unable to have sex?' She made it clear that she was not scared of death as life was meaningless for her but she did not want to die as *kari* because of the stigma attached to this word. Marriage in this tribal area is nothing less than community permission for men to use a woman as a sex object. A physically sick woman is a 'useless thing', as Fatima's husband described her. Fatima's belief that her husband wanted to take advantage of this false accusation so that he could have another woman and be awarded money in a *jirga* was based on the common practice of men, in this region. Indeed, a man

wishing to remarry may achieve this by killing his wife as *kari* (Aftab *et al.*, 2008; *Actionaid*, 2012).

Noori (48) stated that she survived in a state of great confusion for at least two decades. She did not understand why her husband kept hitting and abusing her, despite all her efforts to keep him happy, including not meeting with any of her relatives and neighbours and raising no objections to him having a physical relationship with another woman. To protect and promote this patriarchal system, men have formed different self-serving tools and institutionalized extremely restrictive codes of conduct for women (Moghadam, 1992). Their power enables men to restrict women's movement, to make them isolated and confused so that the women may not understand the nature of the abuse. Noori said that she never resisted any type of abuse but surrendered to his violent actions. Although she had no power to stop him hitting her, she could have told her relatives about his behaviour. However, she preferred to remain silent and not to disclose anything to anyone. She thought that her husband would respect her submissive attitude and keep her at his house forever. She was at her brothers' house when her husband told her brothers over the phone that she was a *kari*. After being accused she felt absolutely lost and defeated and only then did she reveal how she faced violence. She told the truth to her brothers with the hope of having support from her natal family, which is unavailable in most cases. There are cultural reasons to hide the actual situation from the natal families. Every girl, whether she lives in a tribe or town, listens to a common saying, in particular on the day of her marriage: 'Daughter you are leaving us today for your real family. For the sake of our honour, never ever dare to leave your house in your life, only your dead body is supposed to come out of this house'. The hidden message between the lines is, 'from now onwards, we are withdrawing our support and handing you over to a new caretaker and you have to obey him and his family without complaint. No matter what comes your way, do not expect any support from us. Take it as your destiny and face it for the rest of your life. We will remain honourable, if you serve your new family until your last breath'. These cultural proverbs not only make women feel isolated but also prepare them to tolerate violence from their in-laws and husband. Also religiously, a husband's place for his wife is not less than that of a god on earth. Disappointed and sick, Noori could not see any reason why men were still seen as honourable.

Do you call these Baloch or Sindhi honourable who accuse their wives of *kari* and then do *khair/faislo* with the accused man to grab his money? If you are honourable then why do you take money from the person who you think has violated your honour? And after taking money from the *karo* your honour goes into hibernation. When you want to get rid of a woman you plan to kill her and think you are honourable. The real honour would be to kill your wife with the man at the moment you see them doing wrong with your own eyes. (Noori, 48)

Noori and the other female participants accepted men's right to kill on grounds of infidelity; what they objected to was being falsely accused. In addition, they could not understand how men's extreme rage over a violation of honour can subside once money is taken from the person who had violated their honour. The instrumental aggression of male accusers might be observed in many cases such as in the case of Nayab (22), who had been accused as *kari* three times and has been sold twice on this pretext. Previous studies, such as those of Bhatti (2000) and Fatima (2000), discuss instant killing on the grounds of honour, but my female participants' stories suggest the other way round. They were accused as adulterous but had not been killed. Noori's husband's aggression exemplified this in that it helped him to pressurise Noori so that she should not let anybody know about the continuing violence. The tactic helped him to gain power over her and the situation. Perveen (27), who had been accused by her brother-in-law and her husband, had a similar account.

You sell your wives, daughters, sisters and mother a number of times, collect millions from their buyers and call yourself honourable? This is not honour. OK, if you see a woman of your family with your own eyes commit adultery, do not leave her alive for a moment; kill her instantly with the man to please God, but conspiring against women and blaming them as *karis* and then finding innocent men to accuse as *karo* should not be called honour. (Perveen, 27)

Perveen was fully cognisant of the religio-cultural interpretation of men's right to kill on the pretext of honour. However, she raised doubts over the men's actions of gaining time and not killing instantly. She clearly connected the delay with conspiracy. Perveen believed that killing an adulterous woman is an act to please God and man must perform it in order to fulfil his religious duty. Kapadia *et al.* (2010) suggest that in Pakistani society, religion and political forces have always supported and reinforced male-dominated customs and traditions, which has caused the further marginalisation of women. Thus, the social concept of honour empowers not only the male members of a family but also the community, clan and tribe to maintain male control over material, economic and social resources (Kulwicki, 2002). In north

Sindh, women not only feel themselves responsible for such harsh treatment but also this feeling is reinforced by religious leaders (Khan, 2006) and their relatives and neighbours (Hina, 2000). Thus, Perveen and other women were convinced that men are the guardians of their kinswomen's virginity, fidelity and chastity. They considered it to be men's responsibility to keep an eagle eye on the sexual conduct of their kinswomen, whether wife, mother, sister or daughter, in particular, to ensure they do not engage in extra-marital relations. Consequently, these women believed that the men have the right to punish, restrict and kill if a woman violates the code of honour. However, as Moomal (18) explains below, they felt it was wholly dishonourable for men to use the accepted custom of calling *kari* falsely.

The Sindhis sell and buy innocent girls, aged twelve and thirteen, use them as concubines, tear their bodies and then call them *kari* and either kill them or sell them to become rich. I think it would be a much better business for them to open brothels and use us as prostitutes – at least we would not be beaten up mercilessly in the name of honour and no-one would kill us in honour killings. My mother was accused as *kari* for money. My sisters were sold for money and now being an orphan I am an easy target. Now my in-laws and natal family are competing with each other as to who will sell me and become rich. It is only greed and nothing else. (Moomal, 18)

In a serene tone, she said: 'This is not only my story, every other woman accused as a *kari* is being used as fodder for the personal gains of these pimps'. The abused women were exasperated with the continuous rhetoric of honour and appealed to the traditional code of honour; one that seemed more morally acceptable to them. For instance, Aasiya (23), who was denounced by her husband for not agreeing to be a prostitute asked: 'These corrupt men claim that their honour lies between their women's legs, so why did my husband want me to present his honour to strangers?' Women's sexual character determines men's status and honour in a patriarchal culture. In other words, a man's honour is in the hands of his female relatives and if it is violated, the man takes responsibility for this, kills the woman and thus restores his honour. Nevertheless, her ongoing ordeal of violence made Aasiya aware that her husband used the plea of honour killing to take revenge on her.

The women had strong objections to what they saw as the misinterpretation of honour, arguing the concept needed to be rethought and reframed according to the original classical definition of honour. They asserted that they did not want women to defy honour-related boundaries, but that men have been creating fake honour-threatening situations so as to accuse women and

men for their personal benefit. The hatred for their kinsmen was clear in the women's words and facial expressions. Anjum (27) was convinced that the system has no justice for women. In sorrow she said: 'I know no one would believe a simple and innocent woman like me. But if I had had an opportunity, I would have strangled my husband. I hate the bastard'. The anger was visible through the eyes and the words of the women. These women were at a stage where they could not imagine any betterment. They desperately wanted the world to listen and to do something for them. Nayab (22) explained what was going on in the name of honour.

Fathers are selling their daughters to be rich. Brothers are accusing their sisters to pay their debts. Husbands are accusing their wives to make way for second marriages and calling their enemies *karo* to take revenge. What type of honour is this? They have been using the name of honour to cover their crimes. (Nayab, 22)

So why should they choose to speak now? Have they reached such a level of suffering that they cannot remain silent? These were the questions that came into my mind while conducting the interviews. I also wanted to know where this rage against the unfair system would lead them. However, in an absolutely male-dominated tribal culture, where women are seldom seen unaccompanied, how these participants managed to escape from such strict surveillance and save their lives, particularly after being accused as *karis*, appeared as another big question. 'Whenever women assert their rights to choose, or abused wives attempt to get out of abusive relationships, all the patriarchal coercive forces join hands together to suppress the revolt and to eradicate transgression by using all cultural, religious and political weapons' (Khan, 18 April, 1999). I needed to know how these women faced such formidable risks and obstacles and reached the *darulamans*.

Escape from Death

The circumstance in which the women were surviving and leaving home must have been very challenging. Khokhar (2002: 45) explained the situation for women in these conditions and the strategies used by men to control the women: 'Often, the men of upper Sindh conduct their manipulative behaviour in a systematic way that keeps women nervous and scared. A common tactic the abusers use to control their mates is to threaten to kill'.²⁴⁴ The benefits of this tactic are twofold: the women remain controlled and terrified and their potential allies, natal family,

²⁴⁴ My translation.

neighbours and relatives keep their distance. Under these circumstances, leaving an abusive relationship has its own challenges with a number of risks involved. In addition, when it comes to this particular region of Sindh, lack of social service agencies, absence of legal safeguards and medical facilities, expected social and community pressure and legal hitches are some of the issues that often keep women from leaving an abusive relationship.

Nevertheless, in severe life-threatening situations when my female interviewees had realised that they could be killed at any time, they decided to strive hard to survive. They said that the terror of death was the main motive that forced them to take extreme action. For instance, Tasleem (21) narrowly escaped from death and her story illustrates how urgent the situation can be. Upon my asking her how she managed to do so, she replied: 'Life is so dear even to animals; I was a human being after all'. She went on:

When I saw that my in-laws would not let me survive, I screamed and bit the hand of my husband and ran through the door that was still open. I rushed to my mother's house. My mother advised me to run away as she was afraid that my in-laws would reach there and kill us. My brother took me to his friend's house. His friend, next morning, sent us to a person who helped me get to a shelter. (Tasleem, 21)

Tasleem was lucky that she managed to save her own life and was supported and rescued by her natal family, which further extended its support for her when her brother's friend provided a connection for further protection. At such a challenging time, a lonely, runaway woman is very vulnerable but when she is with any of her male family members, her credibility increases and community and family friends might take risks to help her out. Similarly, Perveen described the way that she escaped from her house with the support of relatives.

When I became sure that my husband would kill me any day, any time, in the absence of my husband and when his sister was taking a bath, I left the house. I took shelter at my uncle's home where I heard that my husband had appealed in court that I had been abducted. Then my uncle produced me before the court. I stated before the magistrate that I was not abducted by anyone but my husband wanted to kill me as a *kari* with my sister's husband, so I escaped. (Perveen, 27)

Perveen took refuge at her uncle's house. The knowledge that someone was there to extend support probably encouraged her to flee. She knew that her leaving would cause a considerable increase in her husband's violent behaviour, but even then she left her house. Her

husband started a legal battle to pressurize her to return but her uncle dealt with this for her. However, this is not often the case for women who run away in this culture. As Hoodbai (2000: 07) stated ‘In the context of upper Sindh, it is not heard of that an eloped woman came back or was brought back and survived’. Therefore, to save themselves from violent attack, the accused women usually run to their neighbours or relatives. Previous research on this point suggests that on the whole neighbours and blood relatives do not provide any help to women in honour-related matters because they know that in attempting to save a *kari*’s life they can endanger themselves. As Solangi (2002: 25) stated, ‘Accused *karis*, if they survive, rush to seek refuge either at a religious leader or a feudal lord but are handed back to their relatives sooner or later’. Thus, women threatened with death might believe that influential people might take mercy on them but mostly it goes the other way. The *waderas* return the women to their relatives as a gesture of good will and the relatives remain thankful to him forever. Clearly, the leaders are not concerned about the woman’s fate.

Nevertheless, an important element in the survival stories of women such as Tasleem and Perveen was that their natal families gave them a way out. Indeed, in some cases, not only were the family members’ roles positive (irrespective of gender) but neighbours also helped to save the accused woman’s life. This was a so far undocumented trend in my experience of upper Sindh. Families, in this culture are well aware of the consequences of helping and supporting a *kari*, yet they not only had shown their sympathy but also practically stood by them as long as they could in order to save their lives. Nayab’s story illustrates this:

Within two hours, my brothers with the help of the *wadera* coerced my husband and made him sign the divorce papers. When we heard about it, my sisters advised me to leave the house at once otherwise the men would kill me. My mother took me to a woman’s house who was a social activist and a member of a political party. She already knew about my situation but she told us that the police in that area would not listen to her due to the involvement of the influential *wadera* in the matter. She kept me locked in her room and stood strong before the *wadera* and my brothers and did not hand me over to them. Eventually she managed to call a police mobile unit that took me to the police station. (Nayab, 22)

Nayab’s sisters and mother joined together to save her life but even united they were not as strong as the political worker was. The situation went in favour of Nayab when a woman with strong political backing protected her. The educated and independent woman was in a position to argue with the group of men. Education and participation in politics emancipate and

empower a woman. Uneducated and economically disadvantaged women are treated as nothing more than a commodity so they are easy to mistreat, but an educated, well-off and politically strong woman can negotiate and stand determined.

However, although the police rescued Nayab in response to the social worker's political pressure, it is not easy for every accused woman to have support from the law-enforcement agencies since the previous research in this context shows that the police are inclined to show efficiency only on the orders of political and tribal leaders or, in other words, the local police stations are fully controlled by the *waderas* (Khan, 2006; Bhanbhro *et al.*, 2013). Shahadat (30) told me that her relatives had mercilessly killed many women when the police gave them back. She said that when those women reached the police station for safety, instead of providing protection and taking them to the court, the police dealt with their relatives and, in return for some money, they were given back to their families. Shah (1999), Jafri (2008), Khan (2006) and Hina (2000) all describe the dubious role of the police who, being a part of the culture, feel empathy with and protect the perpetrators of honour killings. On the other hand, some women described the positive role which the police had played in their escape. For instance, the police provided a protective escort for Anjum (27), who had been accused soon after her husband shot a man. The police heard the gunfire, arrested her husband and provided her with a safe refuge. The police are notorious for taking bribes from the relatives of the accused women and handing the women over to them. It is documented that the tradition of honour killing is in fact beneficial for the police as the police bargain with both parties and support the strongest (*see* Faqir, 2001; Fatima, 2000; Hina, 2000; Khan, 2006). In these cases, the police could go against the women and take advantage of their bargaining position, but they opted not to exploit the situation. This police support is a new phenomenon in this cultural scenario, as other women, such as Noori, explained.

As I told you, I was at my parents' home when my husband asked my brothers to kill me as a *kari*. I was shocked but did not know what to do. When we heard that my husband did *faislo* with the man's family, I realized that my time had come. At 4pm the next day, I heard firing and became sure that my husband had come to kill me, so I ran out of the other side of the house. While running through the field, I heard police sirens. Then I changed my direction and went towards them. When the police saw me they let me sit in their vehicle and took me to the police station. There, they asked me a few questions and I told them everything. I do not know why it took me so long to reach the *darulaman*. (Noori, 48)

Her last sentence reflects how reaching the shelter of a police station is not easy and there are many legal hitches in the process. After the woman has risked much to reach the police station, from there the police have to send her to the courts. ‘Pakistan’s state-run refuges are only accessible to women by order of a magistrate and they hold women in quasi-detention’ (Amnesty International, 2001: 37). Under these circumstances, those who reach the shelters provided by the government are considered lucky.

A number of cases have been reported in which accused women who were not acquainted with escape routes ‘have been kidnapped, raped, killed on roads and alleys while searching for shelters or police stations’ (Khokhar, 2002: 13).²⁴⁵ When Shabana (18) was kicked and beaten brutally by her husband after he vowed to kill her as *kari*, she had been looking for an appropriate time to leave but had no clear picture in her mind about where to go.

One day, my in-laws had to visit one of their relatives in the same village so they took me with them. When I saw that my mother-in-law was busy talking with her relatives and my husband was asleep I left the house silently without taking my *hijab* so that they should not question where I was. I ran towards another village. There, I asked passers-by to tell me the address of the police station but everyone refused. I had nothing except my gold earrings. I sold my earrings at a shop for RS3,000 although they were worth about RS10,000. I bought one garment for RS500 from that money. I reached the police station in a rickshaw. I was trembling with fear that my family’s men could reach and kill me at once. (Shabana, 18)

Knowing the severe consequences if caught, destitute women try to reach the women’s shelters at any cost. The only motive for them was to save their lives even if they had no apparent support or guidance. Shabana knew that, traditionally, a woman leaving home is considered a great insult to her men, family and tribe. Since the concept of honour is mainly based on social pressure, including the fear of ‘what people will say’, it ignites honour-related feelings. Socially, the men of the family are called names and are condemned as shameless, weak and dishonoured (Khan, 2006). In many cases, the men pledge not to comb their hair, wear new clothes, have intercourse with their wives, or celebrate anything until they find the woman and kill her, either alone or with the involved person (Shah, 2008). Thus, there is extreme external pressure on the men to regain control of the women: ‘Newspapers have published numerous reports that reveal that the kinsmen of a family have found a runaway

²⁴⁵ My translation.

woman after as many as ten or twelve years and killed her along with her new husband and children (if she has any)' (Khokhar, 2002: 36).²⁴⁶ Najia described how she had narrowly escaped this fate.

My father brought me to his house at 4pm in the evening and by 6pm my youngest sister came and told me secretly that my uncle, my husband and his brother were coming with my brother to kill me. I took my *burqa* and slipped out of the house. I knew the way to the police station but I took the other way so that I should not be caught. I reached the police station that night and asked the duty officer to help me. Within an hour, my relatives reached there. The police officer asked me if I would meet any of them. Upon my refusal, he did not insist. After two days, the court sent me to the Sukker *darulaman*. (Najia, 20)

Najia told me that at the police station she was terrorised by her kinsmen who tried to persuade her to go back with them. Some men use emotional tricks at police stations to deceive their women into changing their decision and giving a statement in their favour. However, past stories of other women had made the women I interviewed clever enough to understand the intentions of their male relatives. Therefore, they either refused to meet the relatives at the police stations or, if they did meet them, refused to go with them. I was surprised to discover that the police did not force the women to go along with their kinsmen.

Most of the women did not even know what the shelters looked like before they arrived. Some participants considered themselves lucky to have escaped from certain death, but for others the rescue and stay at the shelters was only an interval in which to wait for death. As Najia (20) said, 'What if we have escaped? It is just a transitional period. Sooner or later we will all be killed or sold. At least, I am sure that I will be killed as soon as I leave the shelter'. In the meantime, their situations continued to be harsh and demoralising.

Life in the Refuge

These women had fully internalized the cultural assumption that 'the right to life of women in Pakistan is conditional on their obeying social norms and traditions' (Jilani, 1998: 143). Yet to save their lives and seek justice, they had dared to defy these strong cultural restrictions. The temperature in the north of Sindh was over 50° and, because of the acute shortage of

²⁴⁶ My translation.

electricity, the power was shut down for ten to twelve hours each day. In July, the hottest month of the year, all the female survivors I met at three different *darulamans* were visibly upset because of their situation. During the day I spent at the Larkana shelter, electricity was only available for two hours between 9.30am and 8.30pm. Moreover, since it was the Islamic month of *Ramadhan*, many of the women were fasting, which would have put a greater strain on their wellbeing.

Almost every woman I interviewed complained about the inadequate welfare provision at the state shelters. For example, Najia (20) bursts out: ‘What is there, here? We have to survive without light, air and gas. I wouldn’t even wish my enemy to spend a moment in it.’ Similarly, Nazia (26) said, ‘In my village, when the electricity failed, we could sit in the open air but in this shelter the supervisor only allows us to sit on the veranda in her presence for an hour once a day. Then we are sent back to these airtight rooms and have to use plastic hand fans’. Moomal (18) said: ‘Only I know how I am enduring the fast. It is horrible but what else can I do? I want to be rid of my life as there is no peace or hope in life’. Tasleem (21) talked of life in the *darulaman* as a life of oppression, ‘Who wants to live in a prison? Only unfortunate women like me live here. We cannot go upstairs or outside these halls. All the time we have to be locked in these graveyards’. Most of the women that I interviewed cried over the disappointing conditions of the shelters. They showed no desire for life. Their situation exemplifies Shah and Hashmani’s (2000: 44) observation that: ‘Sindh’s *darulamans* are iron cages for unfortunate women, who have no possibility of rescue except to wait until their destiny is written’.²⁴⁷

According to the supervisors of the shelters, strict surveillance is necessary for the safety of the women. The inhabitants are very frustrated and either try to escape or are driven to the most extreme form of violence against themselves. This is reflected in the stories about suicide attempts at various *darulamans* that are often published in local newspapers. This situation is even worse for women than men in jails since, as Khan (1999- 8) explained, ‘suicide becomes the last resort especially for females who have far fewer opportunities than men to carry on a normal life after their family has turned against them’. Every supervisor talked about this problem but they were reluctant to give the exact figures for the number of women who had

²⁴⁷ My translation.

killed themselves in the shelters. The supervisor of Larkana *darulaman* confirmed that the news that an inmate of a shelter has attempted suicide means that the staff must undergo enquiries not only from the law enforcement agencies but also from the media. The staff therefore tries to minimise such risks by not allowing women to stay outside their rooms for more than limited periods of time. However, the supervisors of the shelters had no clear answers when I asked why the conditions in the shelters were so poor and why the inmates were not provided with basic necessities. They said that they used whatever income or amenities were reserved for the shelters by the government as appropriately as they could and that they had no control over the failure of electricity, as it was a general problem all over the province. However, restricted movement, excessive heat and lack of electricity were not the only concerns for the interviewees. They complained about lack of all basic needs. For instance, Nayab (22) spoke about the problems related to financial aid and the lack of medical facilities.

Life is extremely difficult here. I left my home in the dress I am wearing now, with no money. My sisters brought another dress and helped me with some money but they cannot afford to give me more because they are also very poor. I work for other women; wash their clothes; look after their children; stitch their clothes and they give me a little money for that. I have no other means to earn money. I have heard that the government provides some funds for women in the shelters but I have not received any. I was pregnant when I came here. Because of the lack of proper food and medical facilities my child died in my womb in the seventh month of my pregnancy. The administration did not arrange a doctor for me. I gave birth to a dead child. I don't know how I survived. (Nayab, 22)

While telling me about the tragedy, Nayab could not stop sobbing. No wonder the women complained about the *darulamans* where, even in an emergency, no doctor was available. Pregnant and sick women were at the mercy of nature and no-one was responsible for the consequences. Although Nayab was working for the other inmates, the money she earned was not sufficient to fulfil her needs, especially as the other women also had little or no sources of income and, as she explained, poverty prevented her sisters from helping her. Similarly, Noori (48), who had diabetes as well as severe toothache with nothing to remedy either condition, said: 'This is my ninth month here. I am sick but I have nothing even to buy a painkiller'.

The economic deprivation seemed one of the biggest reasons for the suffering of these women. When I visited the jails to meet the male interviewees, they told me that they were generating

some income by doing various types of labouring to buy everyday things, but no such work opportunities were available to these women. Thus, this was an example of gender-based ‘feminized poverty’ (Dressel, 1994) whereby women are at a higher risk of being poor than men in every situation and every walk of life.

The consequent physical deprivation caused the women great mental and physical distress. For example, Aasiya (23) showed me her arms, neck and back and said: ‘Look at my body. My skin is coming off. There is no water for taking a bath. The water we have to drink is very contaminated. I wish I had something to kill myself with’. Aasiya was one of many women who complained about depression, anxiety and sleep disorders. The state of distress was acute to the level that the women I interviewed were unable to recall what it felt like when they were calm and comfortable. The sense of worthlessness and hopelessness was breaking them. Moreover, despite their extremely challenging situations, there was no counselling or emotional support available through the shelters.

When I looked around the shelters, the children (aged between six months and thirteen years) had no proper clothes to wear; not even slippers on their feet. Although children in the shelters had a terrible existence, their mothers were relieved that at least their children were with them; those mothers who, for one reason or another, could not bring their children with them were far more worried. Anjum, whose husband had suddenly called her a *kari* after seeing the police, as described above, could only bring two of her children with her because the police did not allow her to take the older children. She appeared terribly upset about this as her other two children were at the mercy of her husband and in-laws. Moreover, she had no-one who could inform her about the well-being of her children.

There is no peace, no rest. I cannot stop shedding tears even for a minute. I am burning from inside. I cannot eat anything. What to do, where to go? The police allowed me to take only my two younger girls aged six and seven. My ten-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter were crying for me but I could not take them. I do not know what has happened to them. I have no-one’s mobile number to call and ask someone.
(Anjum, 27)

The failure of the state to ensure women’s social, economic and human rights further compounded the neglect which I observed in the shelters. There were no funds to seek legal aid, and the lack of assistance increased their fears both for the safety of their children and that

they might lose custody of their children. Perveen (27) kept crying and saying, ‘I would have taken my children with me had I had enough money to pay their fare’. Although she had to leave her children to save her life, she kept blaming herself for being selfish and putting her children into a dangerous situation so as to rescue herself.

Although the women had given a great portion of their lives to their husbands and in-laws, they had no confidence that their children would be safe in the hands of these people, especially since one false accusation could disconnect them from their children. As Shahadat (30) explained: ‘only a miracle will let me see my children again. I know the brutes will sell my weak body and my children will never see their mother again. They will sell my daughters and enslave my sons. I need to die before it happens’. Shahadat’s fear was not baseless: according to the local tradition, an accused woman is supposed to be sold in a faraway place so that she should not pollute the community. These women are considered unclean and therefore no-one in the family, clan or tribe will marry them. The hatred attached to a *kari* is surely one of the reasons not to marry her but the main thing is the belief that a *kari* will give birth to dirty children and thus the whole family and coming generations will be contaminated²⁴⁸ (Solangi: 2002). Moreover, it is a cultural taboo that sold women cannot see their families, including their children. Rajar (2000: 27), discussing the misery of sold women, stated that a woman at the *darlaman* told him that while selling her to a man for RS50,000, her brother suggested that the buyer should keep her chained up otherwise she would run away. This is not only an example of unjust gender dictates for women at the micro-level, it also conforms to respected religious rules that ‘an honourable man must keep an eagle-eye on the actions of his women. Men are socialized to believe that women cannot be trusted to protect their chastity’ (Kocturk, 1992: 55).

Hence, the lives of the women had not only been made unbearable within their homes in the name of the honour-related tradition, but they were structurally trapped in subordinate positions by the state and its legal and judicial system, where all types of abuse and violence are accepted as normal. The life of the women in the shelters appears to be simply a transition from domestic violence to community and state violence. The shelters failed to give any impression of home, any form of peace or any ray of hope to these persecuted women. The

²⁴⁸ My Translation.

women were saddened to realise that the state had nothing to offer them to ensure a reasonable level of survival. This conveys a strong message to any potentially rebellious women to discourage them from acting against any injustice done to them, as there is no redress or real support available. Consequently, when thinking of their painful present state, a primary dilemma was where they should go afterwards.

The women could continue to stay in the shelters for a reasonable amount of time but the unwelcoming and wretched conditions there increased their troubles. What was the use of the shelters that had no proper food, drinkable water, medicine, counselling, entertainment or teaching facilities for the children, or occupational training for the women? It is possible that the budget was deliberately kept too low in order to discourage women from leaving their homes. However, the possibility of misuse of the budget cannot be ruled out. My female interviewees confirmed that the management discouraged them from staying longer than they considered necessary and therefore they felt bound to go back to the same threatening situation they had left. A few had a little hope but most could only see chaos and conspiracies waiting for them outside the shelters.

What Future do these abused Women See?

Whenever my in-laws and my maternal relatives visit the shelter, they threaten that if I do not give a statement in their favour in court, they will kill me. I don't want to go with either of them. My maternal uncles will not kill me but will sell me like my mother and so will my in-laws. I asked my in-laws why their greed is not satisfied after they have taken the greatest amount that has ever been taken from a *karo* in Sindh. What can I see for my future? Where shall I go? (Moomal, 18)

Moomal could not decide to whom she should go, either her in-laws or her parents, as both were equally disastrous options. While listening to her account, it seemed to me that the women were blank cheques kept in the shelters while outside two parallel forces were trying to find ways to cash these cheques. For Moomal (18), the death threat was just a blackmailing tactic to put pressure on her. She went on to explain that they only kill old and ugly women who cannot be sold and she was too young and beautiful to be killed. Therefore, she believed that whichever party won the battle would sell her off.

The court, in making the decision over a woman's fate, expects the woman to decide who she wants to go with. In most cases, the women have only two options, either to go with the husband or the parents. For an accused woman who has run away, both options have their own consequences. Most of the women were threatened by their in-laws so they looked to their natal family as a last resort. However, opting to live with their parents was seldom a safer or securer option. Even those parents who had helped them escape cannot keep them because 'keeping a *kari* at home and not killing or selling her is a curse and a shame' (Khan, 2006: 247). For instance, Nazia (26), who had been sold twice previously, wanted to stay with her parents to look after her natal family but she felt that her father was unable to understand her sentiments. Miserably, she talked about her expected future:

My father has already taken RS100, 000 from someone. It means that even before I leave the shelter, I am sold. My father has sold me twice before and both times I faced nothing but mental and physical torture. I begged my father and said, 'You should become my supporter. I will help you and look after all of you but if you sell me a third time, I will not go with you'. He threatened me with the worst consequences, saying that, if I don't listen to him, he will kill me. (Nazia, 26)

Nazia pleaded with her father to let her remain in his house. Her father knew that she would not have any other option except to go with him so he had already taken money from someone in exchange for her. In this society, providing shelter to a daughter who has been accused as *kari* is considered a matter of shame but selling the *kari* daughter by the father is an acceptable custom. Nazia was bound to suffer whichever way her father wanted her fate to be decided: he had two options for her, either to be killed or to be sold. Thus, the lack of options put her in a helpless and hopeless situation. Nazia said that her father would keep selling her as many times as he could. Those who had only one choice were in an even greater trouble. For instance, Shahadat, at 30 years old, had no other chance of rescue except in leaving the shelter with her father.

Please save me from being sold. I don't need my property back. I request the judge to give me freedom and to provide me with security so that I can take my children somewhere. Save me from the tyrants. Save my children. I do not want to be sold. I do not know where the people will take me. This is a curse. Who can save my life? (Shahadat, 30)

Shahadat, who had previously fought for her right to property, had lost her will to resist and being helpless had given in, yet she could not reverse the situation; she now had to pay a severe price for standing up for her rights. Her case exemplifies how men within patriarchal society in Sindh use every tactic and possible means to silence women. The temporary stay at the shelter, and the stressful wait for the court's decision as to whom the woman would be sent, was a continuation of the mental violence.

Whilst the women who had to go to their natal families were unhappy and could only see another regime of control and power imposed on them, those without any living parents were in an even more hopeless situation. For example, Fatima's (55) situation was especially difficult because she had no parents. Where to go to on leaving the shelter was an enormous problem for her since she could not go back to her husband as she was sure she would be killed if he saw her again. She explained her situation.

The judge says that I cannot leave the shelter alone. I have been trying to contact my brother so that he could take me but my brother is scared of being victimised by my husband. Now I have requested to the court to give me independence so that I can go to my aunt who lives further down the area where my parents used to live. She came to the shelter to see me. She is willing to keep me but, being very frightened, she does not want her name to be disclosed in any matter so I cannot give her name in court.
(Fatima, 55)

Fatima's story shows how frightened women can be in these situations. It also tells not only about the insecurity of the women in this patriarchal society but also of those who want to provide support to them. However, the court needed evidence as to the identity of the person Fatima planned to leave with and compliance with this last demand was most strictly required in order to provide protection to women like Fatima. Human rights organisations, NGOs and various other groups have been working for the betterment of women in the area but, unfortunately, I could not see any practical attempts by these organisations to provide any sort of relief to the women I interviewed. There was neither legal assistance nor residential support available for them, including any from the government. There was no opportunity or protection provided for these women's settlement in the future, leaving them unprotected and hopeless.

The women's fear and anxiety were obvious when they discussed their situations. They were scared at the thought that they would be given back to those who had once threatened them with death and who were now even more furious because the women had challenged men's power and prestige by defying the restrictions of their houses. The women were sure that their men would leave no stone unturned to take revenge on them. They had taken a big step in leaving their houses against all odds; however, when they reached the shelters, instead of finding refuge they found themselves in a kind of revolving door of further deprivation and insecurity. They did not know who they should complain to or who would listen to them. Several women kept asking me what kind of justice it was that allowed killers and criminals to remain at large whilst stranded women had no protection. Noori was at a loss when, at age 48, she found no possibility of rescue.

There is no room for an unwanted woman like me. No one comes to see me. I have no options. My eldest son has just married. My daughters cannot do anything for me for they are in the hands of others. My brothers are afraid of my husband and my in-laws so they do not want to help me. I know my husband and his relatives will kill me but I request you to let people know not to respect my husband as a hero. He did make a great drama of getting rid of his old wife so as to get a new wife and grab money from the innocent boy (*karo*) in a *faislo*. You tell me, where shall I go? (Noori, 48)

She went on to explain that when her son had married she had not been contacted. This reflects the fact that men who grow up in this strictly gender-biased society, irrespective of any relationship, consider every woman inferior and remain unconcerned with their plight. Her married daughters could not do anything for her as their in-laws had control over them. Her brothers did not want to take the risk involved in supporting her and inviting trouble. Thus, she had no hope for the future. She was certain she would be killed. In this respect, the supervisors of the shelter confirmed that many unwanted women have been killed as soon as they left the shelters and no-one has been held responsible. Each woman talked about her dark and uncertain future and not one of them could see anything worthwhile in it.

What future? I will be killed or sold either by my brothers or my husband. My husband will get another wife in the *jirga* with money from the *karo*. Is there someone to listen to me or do justice in my case? When I went to the police, the police officer asked the *wadera* of the village if he [the *wadera*] would keep me as a *sam* but the *wadera* refused because I was an old woman. I am not young or beautiful. Nobody will buy me so why would he take me. *Waderas* are interested only in young girls so that they can

make money by selling them. I have no place to live. No-one will own me. I will be killed as soon as I leave this shelter. (Anjum, 27)

Anjum was only 27 but, according to the parameters of the strict patriarchal and tribal culture, she was considered an old woman. She confirmed that when the *wadera* saw her, he refused to help her. Elderly accused women are liabilities so neither relatives nor *waderas* are interested in their lives because they cannot be sold. Anjum's account reveals a situation whereby life is granted to the young accused women but the old women are to die. However, the price for living was not easy to pay. Their survival was conditional on their price in the *jirgas* and how forthcoming their unknown buyers were. The *jirgas* are organized by the *waderas*, who appear to be the supreme beneficiary of the process of these personal and illegal law courts. As in my male interviewees' accounts, the *wadera* was the central character in every woman's story.

Women's Perspective on the Role of *Waderas*

Whether it was the story of a man or a woman, no account was complete without the character of a *wadera* or a *sardar*. They are a fundamental part of the socio-cultural and political structure of the interior of Sindh. Being the supreme chief of his jurisdiction, and so the most influential and powerful person in his area, it is the unofficial responsibility of a *wadera* to maintain the honour of his village. Consequently, he can interfere in the affairs of any family; indeed, an offended family considers his involvement a matter of pride. In tribal rural Sindh, the sexual, moral and social conduct of a woman is a symbol of man's honour, and the *wadera* plays a key role in supporting and helping families curb rebellious women.

For instance, Shabana (18) was brought back by the *wadera* when she eloped from her grandmother's house with her cousin. The couple stayed at a friend's house where the *wadera* found them with the help of the same friend. The authoritative role of the *wadera* made Shabana believe his words when he assured her that he would arrange a marriage of her choice if she followed him. Shabana said, 'I trusted the *wadera* because my cousin's friend was also with him. I only understood the conspiracy when the *wadera* handed me over to my grandmother, who beat me up. I was then made a kind of prisoner there'.

In the case of Shabana, instead of killing her on the spot, a trick was played on her. First, a friend of her lover was used to find out where she was hidden. Then, she was separated from her lover and brought back to her grandparents by the *wadera* under false pretences. Moreover, the *wadera*'s actions made him even nobler in the eyes of her family, which gave him complete authority to direct them as to how to deal with this disobedient woman. Shabana was sure that the plotting and the tricks were for some material gain. As she said, 'the *wadera* has become the master of my life and whenever I am sold, he will have the maximum share'. Meanwhile, the cousin that she eloped with was a declared *karo* and had to face a *jirga* trial in order to save his life.

Shabana was not the only woman who saw her destiny in the hands of the *wadera*. Shahadat (30) said, 'my father is waiting for me outside to hand me over to the *sardar* to be sold in a *jirga*. By selling me as a *kari*, the *sardar* will receive money and my father will save his son's life'. Shahadat's father admitted to her that she was wrongly accused but, since within this society a daughter is far less valued than a son, her father's only interest was to save the life of his son. Therefore, he asked Shahadat to admit before the judge that her brother murdered the boy in a fit of fury when he saw her with him in a compromising position. Thus, to gain the benefit of the customary law by which a man who kills for honour faces insignificant punishment, a father was ready to establish that his daughter was adulterous. Through this, she was more than likely to be sold, her children would not see their mother again, and she would face a life filled with taunts and abuse.

But what if Shahadat were to refuse to admit the wrongful allegation in court? Shahadat was clear on this point: 'My denial of the false allegation will lead me nowhere but to an instant death as soon as I leave the centre'. On the other hand, her acceptance of the false allegation would grant her life, but she will be sold. This reflects a report on a study of the 'Role of Tribal *Jirga* in Violence against Women' (PDI, 2005) that reveals the following: 'An accused woman in *jirga* is sold as a property or a commodity. Nobody remained concerned with the misery of *karis*'. Earning money by selling such a woman is not an obscenity because the *wadera* demands that those involved should adhere to custom. Hence, the role of the *wadera* is not limited to conducting a *jirga* and selling a *kari* but rather he remains involved throughout the whole process, from the moment a woman is called a *kari*. Nazia who had been sold twice

before and was accused for a third time, illustrated how she was sold the first time and what she faced.

When the news spread that I had left my house, my father came to the police station with the *wadera* and pleaded with me to go back. I realized the pain and insult my father was going through, so I decided to follow my father. The *wadera* of the village took me to his *haveli*. On my twelfth day in the house, the *wadera* enquired about the reality of the allegation. I replied that it was false and I needed to live with my parents, as I knew that my husband and in-laws would kill me. The *wadera* reminded me that no one keeps a *kari*. I said, 'In this case do whatever you think is better for me'. That evening, he called in a few people, who saw me and one of them accepted me. The *wadera* then sold me for RS350,000. (Nazia, 26)

When I asked her where the money went, she replied: 'RS80,000 were given to my father. RS100,000 were given to my husband and the rest went in the pocket of the *wadera*'. When I asked her the next question, Nazia spoke slowly in response with her head down. My question was: 'How do you know that?' and her reply was, 'I was bound to know. These things cannot be hidden from a sold *kari*. The buyers keep repeating the price they had paid, in order to pressurize and insult the bought *kari*'.

It was a kind of slavery. Not only the person who bought me in the name of marriage but his entire family taunted me, blamed me, called me *kari*, ugly and slut. They used to make me work for 18 hours a day inside the house and in the fields. I used to milk 20 buffaloes every day. Sometimes I had to sleep without food. I was prepared to work for 24 hours but the verbal and physical abuse was unbearable. Whenever I tried to clarify my position that it was a mistaken accusation, they beat me. I tried my best not to give them any chances to be angry but they always found a reason to beat me. (Nazia, 26)

After describing who sold her and why she was bought, Nazia went on to explain how the unbearable verbal and physical abuse forced her to run away from that house. When she ran, she was caught and once again sold by the *wadera* to another master. She then faced the same humiliating situation, and ran away another time. In her opinion, on both occasions, the income generated by selling her was distributed among the three shareholders; her father, the husband (the man who had bought her) and the *wadera*, who was entitled to the biggest share. Even after being sold twice, when I interviewed her she was again in the shelter and due to be sold on her release. Nazia's story shows that a woman who has once been labelled as a *kari* continues to be trapped within a vicious circle built in the name of honour.

I have not found any explanation in previous research as to how people go about approaching the *wadera* to buy a *kari* woman. However, the accounts of the women clearly indicate that before they are sold, a number of men come to see them. Moreover, as regards the question of why the *waderas* are so interested in selling the *karis*, Soomro (2002) states that a *kari* woman is sold at a higher price than an innocent woman. He discusses the findings of a woman journalist, Kanwal Sindhi, according to whose research, *kari* women are bought by men who can best be termed as ‘womanisers’: ‘They see these women are sexually active and more responsive, which is why they prefer them. They are neither humane nor considerate to women; they do this for personal reasons’ (Soomro (2002: 12). Khan (2006: 180) states that ‘*Karis* are normally sold at a higher price in the market than ‘innocent’ women. If an ordinary woman is sold for 100,000 rupees, a *kari* is sold for 150,000’. Indeed, no-one from the male relatives (husband, father, brothers) to the *wadera* and the buyers has any concern for the plight of the women. They all join forces to keep the tribal judicial system alive because, as Khan (2006: 233) explains, ‘they all collectively or individually benefit from such a system. The losers and sufferers are the women who have no representation in the *jirga* council’. Although the *jirgas* have so much power over the women’s future and destiny, the women themselves are not allowed to attend a *jirga*, their duty being solely to comply with the punishment decided there.

Shaikh (2000: 62) argues that ‘for the last few decades, the *jirgas* have been the major source of income for the *waderas*. The area *sardars* do not want the people of the village to seek help from the police in honour related cases’.²⁴⁹ Bringing all the cases to the *waderas* for *faislo* has become the most acceptable and honourable method for the villagers. The assurance that the *wadera* can manage the issue and restore their lost honour strengthens the confidence of the people. They invite the area *sardar* to help them to save their honour and he takes sides with the male relatives who allege that their woman was adulterous. Nayab’s experience exemplifies this well. From the very moment she was accused by her five brothers, the *wadera* became part of each step of the process.

As soon I and my mother went to the house of the political worker for safety, my brothers also reached it with the *wadera* and insisted that she hand me over to them. The brave woman strictly refused to do so and locked my mother and me in her room

²⁴⁹ My translation.

and asked the *wadera* not to commit an injustice. The *wadera* said to her that I had been declared *kari* by my brothers, my husband had divorced me and no-one had the right to keep a *kari*. In that locked room, I was able to hear the exchange of arguments from both sides, when I realised that the political worker was becoming weaker before the six men, I told myself that no-one could save my life. That was the exact time the police mobile arrived. The *wadera* talked to the police as well but the police officer said that the matter had reached higher authorities so they were helpless. First, the police sent my brothers and the *wadera* away, then I opened the door-latch from inside and went with the police in a police-mobile. Before long, the *wadera* reached the police station but the police officer refused to hand me over to him. (Nayab, 22)

Nayab was lucky to have social assistance. Her mother and the political group supported the worker in a very trying situation. Since the moment Nayab was called *kari*, intrusive observation of her by the *wadera* began. He followed her wherever she went. He put pressure on the political worker who so bravely defended Nayab. He disputed with the police. And all he did was justified by the argument that no-one should keep a *kari* except for him – an argument that has no logic and is not supported by any law but by a custom that the alleged *kari*'s future has to be decided by the area *wadera*. When he failed in his pursuit, due to his authoritative status he was able to visit the shelter twice. Nayab explained his influence as follows:

The *wadera* terrorized my in-laws to the extent that nobody would visit to me in the shelter. When he was assured that I had no supporters and I virtually had nothing, he brought two dresses for me in the shelter and said if I favoured him, he would give them to me. On my refusal, he took the dresses back with him. The *wadera* was bribing me so that I would trust him and go with him so that he could sell me for money. (Nayab, 22)

Isolating vulnerable women for personal benefit is common practice among the men, as it does not cause them much trouble. The woman, as a result of the fear and anxiety caused by men's actions, take hasty decisions without giving much consideration to any consequences they might have to face. In Nayab's case, the *wadera* offered her the option of giving a statement in his favour in court; in which case, he would help her to marry the alleged *karo*. He offered her two embroidered dresses in order to take advantage of her vulnerable situation. However, Nayab knew that even if she had had an affair with the alleged *karo*, no *sardar* on earth would have helped her to marry him. So she recognized the *wadera*'s trick to buy her trust either for some items of clothing or for a false promise. She had told him very clearly that she needed to live with her husband and she had no link with the *karo* and they both knew that if the *wadera*

were to give her a written statement in the court saying that he would send her back to her husband then she would be allowed to go with him. However, when she asked him to do so, he refused and in response to this Nayab refused to give a statement in his favour. It is clear that men know how long a woman can endure living in a shelter. It is a test of patience and tolerance on the part of an accused woman, and the men know that standing firm and strong in a situation without any moral, financial and legal aid is not an easy task. They know that a woman is likely to give in when she can endure no more.

When I asked Nayab why the *wadera* was so interested in her in particular, her answer was very straightforward: ‘Not just in me. The *waderas* are interested in every *kari*, to sell them and earn money. The *wadera* knows I’m beautiful and young; so he will keep selling me as many times as possible from one to another by continually calling me a *kari*’. This was a very different situation to the desperation of Noori (48) who had diabetes. She was abandoned by her relatives and could only see a merciless death after leaving the shelter but no *wadera* was pursuing her. Similarly, Shahdat (30), the victim of the false accusation, was crying for her two children whom she left at home at the mercy of her neighbours, but no *wadera* came forward to support her. Although the *wadera* came to see her at the police station, when the police asked him if he could give her protection, he refused to take her with him. As she angrily explained: ‘Why would the *wadera* keep me, I’m neither young nor beautiful’.

Karis are a source of money both for the men of their family and for the *waderas*, and therefore they are kept alive. However, they can only be sold by the *waderas* not by their own relatives. Moreover, being so influential, *waderas* can act above the law and no-one dares to challenge or go against their orders. They handle and control situations, acting as the greatest supporter of the tribal tradition of honour; all who live within their dominion are supposed to bring their disagreements and honour-related disputes to the *wadera* for the *faislo* in the *jirga*, and be represented by the *wadera*.

Thus, the *wadera* is the sole authority on deciding how to deal with such cases and provides by far the most effective way to restore the honour of the offended family. He penalizes the opposing party to give the insulted party a set amount of money and one or two women. The distribution of the money involved is the responsibility of the *wadera* alone and no-one can question his share: both parties have to agree with the decision whether they like it or not.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted how most of the women I interviewed, except for Najia (who was caught while she was talking to her boyfriend over a cell phone) and Shabana (who eloped from her grandmother's house with her cousin), were accused by their kinsmen of being *kari* with a man whom they had neither met nor seen. Although Perveen had known her sister's husband, with whom she was declared *kari* by her husband, she denied any relationship with him.

The women's narratives presented a starkly different picture of honour killing than that understood from the perspective of men. The women accepted that unfaithful women should be killed as *kari* to restore the honour of the family and community. However, they were against false accusations and protested their innocence.

They told me that the men see nothing immoral in calling their kinwomen *karis*. The accusations may be to get rid of them so as to have a second wife, to take revenge on enemies or to achieve some financial and social goal. In addition, when a man calls a woman *kari*, irrespective of the real situation, neither the accused woman nor any other family member can restore her innocence. The female survivors accepted men's right to kill on the grounds of actual betrayal; however, they objected to being falsely accused as is so often the case. Thus, not only do the men take advantage of the isolated position of the woman but they also gain comprehensive benefits from the deeply entrenched structure of honour-related traditions.

My female interviewees' stories demonstrated how, after they had been accused, each attempted to save her life despite all uncertainties because she was so scared of being persecuted or killed. They then faced numerous social and legal hindrances to reach the shelters. I have described the current conditions of the shelters where the women were not even provided with the basic necessities of life, thus increasing their plight and their misery. Moreover, legal aid and support against the extreme violence they were threatened with were sorely lacking when they were needed the most. Even information about human rights organizations and the criminal justice process was not available despite the fact that they were threatened with death. Although the conditions in the *darulamans* were inhuman, the women could not leave the shelters without someone of whom the court approved and the dilemma for

them was who they would go with. Most of the women had no other option than to go with the same person or family they had left on being accused and threatened to be killed as *kari*.

Thus, my female participants' accounts demonstrated clearly that, for them at least, the existing practice of *karo-kari* is an effective and protected method for their kinsmen to gain social and financial advantage; many of the women's stories revealed the material gains and interests that were hidden behind the allegations against them. The elderly women who were abandoned by their families were almost sure to be killed once they left the shelter. On the other hand, the younger women feared being sold for money in a *jirga* by a *sardar*. The women, being helpless, had no hope of support from anyone. They were at the mercy of the discriminatory system and wanted the world to pay heed to their plight in order to rescue them.

Conclusion

My study of honour killing in northern Sindh (Pakistan) was initially inspired by news of the killing of women as *kari* which I had been hearing since my childhood. Instead of listening to any sympathy for the victims, I noticed the discrediting comments made by the people around me about the *kari* who had been mercilessly killed. Local newspaper reports and the commentaries about honour killings, in which women's conduct was considered shameful and the act of killing was justified on the grounds of honour, made me think deeply about the tradition of honour killing. To discover more about honour-related violence, I did some research and wrote a few articles in local Urdu newspapers after I had witnessed the coldblooded murder of a helpless woman. Armed men shot her down in the middle of the street, angrily and contemptuously calling her *kari* as they did so. The alarming increase in the number of honour killings in Sindh and the equally disturbing comments in support of such killings on the pretext of honour, not only from people with a tribal background but also from educated people, made me determined to write a thesis on the issue. I remember that, in 1999, I asked a senior professor at a Pakistani University why European people do not kill their women for honour. His reply was, 'because they do not have honour'. My research suggests that when the abstract meaning of honour, which has a number of social, spiritual and communal implications for men, is applied to women, it is limited to their sexuality only and to the duty of men to guard it. Through these abstract definitions, men appear honourable and women are merely a threat to their honour. This interpretation of the word has created a huge difference between the two genders, especially in patriarchal and tribal societies, such as the Middle East and South Asia (Jafri, 2008; Khan, 2006; Hina, 2000), where the greatest number of honour-related crimes against women are reported.

In the sub-continent, the history of violence against women in the name of tradition is centuries old. There have now been decades of persecution of women in the name of honour in every province of Pakistan, including Sindh. However, my research suggests that the tradition of honour killing in Sindh came with the Baloch migrants and therefore the greatest numbers of cases of honour-related violence occur in those districts of Sindh which are close to Baluchistan. The limited economic opportunities, poverty, dysfunctional educational structure and marriage system badly impact upon the rural population in general and women in particular. Rural women are often subject to various types of violence from childhood on and

have very little redress when it is needed the most. In addition, despite being banned by the government, the *jirga* system, which is embedded in the rural structure, plays a vital role in settling local disputes, including honour killing cases, and increasing violence against women. When women who are accused as *kari* face the *jirga*, they have no option but to obey its decision. The influential tribal leaders virtually control the economy and law and order situation however they want (*see* Chapter Two).

In this study, I sought to explore the stories of women (threatened with death) and men (killers) in order to allow their voices to be heard. I applied a qualitative research method, based on interviews with 26 people altogether, thirteen men and thirteen women. Before conducting the interviews, I had not expected the emotional impact on me as a researcher. My research dealt with a highly sensitive issue, and the bitter experiences of my participants (especially the women) made them as well as me emotional. Because of the long-term emotional effects of these narratives on me, I struggled to be unbiased. After transcribing the data, I had to take some time to compose myself before I was able to analyse it rationally and neutrally. Moreover, as I had interviewed both men and women, I came across different experiences. For many women, expressing their emotions became a cathartic experience, as they had never told their stories so explicitly to others. The female participants did not make me feel like an outsider, rather they showed great trust in me. Yet, I remained uneasy, as I had almost nothing to offer them compared to what they had given me. As far as the male interviewees were concerned, most of them were very humble, respectful and talkative, but the pistol in their pocket (which they mentioned to me) made me a little scared. My anxiety increased when they explained the details of how they had fearlessly murdered people. However, I also experienced some other unanticipated problems. For instance, a few men had given consent to be interviewed over the telephone to the intermediaries, but when I travelled quite a long way to reach the village to see them, they refused to come and did not turn up. On another occasion, two male interviewees, almost at the end of their interview, changed their version and denied everything they had admitted before, while the tape recorder was switched on. One of these angrily demanded cash in return for providing such information to me. He believed that I was working for some international agency and receiving funds from it. In the prison, a suspected killer who wanted to be interviewed entered in the office I was sitting in. As soon as he saw me, he turned his back on me and left the office. Later, the prison authorities told me that he would not talk to a woman whose face was uncovered.

Nevertheless, that was not the only occasion when I felt that I was being ignored because of my gender. In the villages and jails, even among educated men, I was the most neglected person. However, I was aware of my responsibility and that conducting the research required a professional attitude, so my target was to complete the task respectfully and therefore I faced the challenges with grace and remained appreciative and respectful.

My findings support the view that in this region violence is embedded in every aspect of life. The laws of the state, socio-legal organizations and the overall attitudes and actions of men support gender discrimination to the extent that women, despite their hard work, have no official record of their existence. Although the residents of this particular area, irrespective of gender, live in poverty from childhood and are handicapped by a lack of education, a female childhood is harder than that of a male child because of the strict taboos. Similarly, although everyone has limited economic opportunities, men's labour is recognized whilst women's efforts to take care of their house and family are largely ignored. The weak economic position of women, along with violent family and marital relationships in this strongly patriarchal culture, leave women completely powerless (*see* Chapter Four).

In northern Sindh, men and women (including those whom I interviewed) have been socialized by the doctrine that honour is an attribute of men, so it is the responsibility of men to defend their honour, and women, being inferior, have to act as subordinate to men. Needless to say, men's honour is heavily dependent upon women's sexual and moral conduct and so the men whom I interviewed did not want to think of any other option than to kill any wayward kinswoman alongside the man with whom she was involved. Those of my male participants who were not in jail had either committed honour killings immediately or waited until they had collected evidence of their wrongdoing before killing their victims. Some of the jailed men, however, claimed that they were innocent. Most killers, however, remain free. By accomplishing this religio-cultural task, the killer receives applause from the whole community, including the *wadera*, who helps them to remain safe from arrest. Thus, instead of being arrested, most killers benefitted from the *jirga* conducted by the *sardar*, where honour killing was not considered a crime but a thing to be proud of (*see* Chapter Five). In the *jirga*, killers not only get away with murder but the illegal courts even support them by providing them with compensation – in the form of cash or women.

The female survivors completely agreed with the notion that unfaithful women should be dealt with in accordance with tribal values, that is, to be killed instantly; what they objected to was being falsely accused. My most female participants were accused of being *kari* with a man whom they had never even seen. They protested their innocence and said that their kinsmen had significant financial objectives in accusing them. The women believed that, since their kinsmen knew that an accused woman could not restore her innocence once she had been accused, they misused their power. Afraid of being killed, the women left their houses, but they frequently faced social and legal hindrances in reaching the shelters, which proved to be another challenge. The shelters failed to provide any emotional, financial or constructive support to them. At the point of leaving, they were wondering what to do. The elderly women were almost sure to be killed once they left the shelter and the younger women feared being sold for money in a *jirga* by a *sardar*. The helpless women were at the mercy of this inequitable system (*see* Chapter Six).

My data indicate that honour killing in this region is class based. Peasants, labourers and people with menial jobs, living in a narrow social and economic sphere, under the oppressive control of *waderas*, are victimized by this honour-related violence. Negligence in the field of education, the scarcity of the basic needs of life including water and electricity and proper housing, large and extended families, no state welfare programme, extreme poverty and a meagre hope for the future are the major reasons for this strong patriarchal system. When it comes to their upbringing, both genders face enormous difficulties, although of different natures, and as they grow and reach puberty the discrimination at home and outside grows wider and bigger. Women's submission to men's anger and men's compliance to the subtle cultural, traditional and religious honour-related duties become mandatory for survival for both genders. However, women's submission to all sorts of violent behaviour cannot always spare them from being accused as a *kari*.

The accounts of women survivors revealed that behind the accusations, the male family members had a variety of financial motivations. The situation was further aggravated when some of the male family members were either drug abusers, gamblers or were in debt. In either case, the men needed money for settling their disputes and debts. For example, Nazia (26), whose father was a gambler, sold his land, home and three daughters, including Nazia, to pay off a loan. Moomal (18) said that her father, both a gambler and an addict, accused her mother

as a *kari* and later she was sold. Simultaneously, Moomal was accused as *kari* by her drug-abuser husband. Aasiya (23) wanted to get rid of her drug-addicted husband. The narratives of the women clearly tell that women in the family, being the marginalized group, had been the easiest targets for the men to sell them and settle their debts. So, the gamblers and the addicts falsely accused their women as *kari*. The strongest reason behind this is that it is not so easy to sell a kinswoman until men find a solid justification and unfortunately the word *kari* provides a very concrete reason to continue violence against women without any fear. Forty-eight years old, Noori concluded, 'We women are the source of money for our money-mongering, greedy parents and in-laws.' In this highly gender-biased social, legal, judicial, political and structural system, the accusers would not face rebuttal from any corner of society for selling their kinswomen. In general, the accused women usually have no hope of rescue as the addiction problem, gambling and physical, sexual and financial abuse by men against women are considered an internal matter for a family and the more aggressive the men are, the more honourably society treats them.

However, my research has revealed something unique, because help given to the accused women by their birth families, relatives and the police has not been part of previous findings about honour killing in Sindh. However, some of my female participants were helped by their mothers, brothers or even by the police. For example, Tasleem (21), when accused by her in-laws, rushed back to her natal family. It was her mother who pleaded with her son to help Tasleem and he took her away to save her life. Nayab (22) was accused by her brothers but her mother stood by her and took her to a female political activist who protected her. Perveen (27) left her home after her husband accused her as *kari* and took shelter at her uncle's house who supported her and faced judicial and legal issues. These examples clearly show that some families took complex decisions to rescue their daughters in ways that indicate awareness. That might be because people have observed killings on false allegations and have realized the ulterior interests behind the allegations and killings.

Similarly, receiving help from the police by *karis* has not been documented before. This phenomenon is absolutely new. Sympathy from the police is visible in the case of Anjum (27), who had been accused soon after her husband shot a man. The police heard the gunfire, arrested her husband and provided her with a safe refuge along with her two children. Noori (48) was protected by the police when she was wandering through the field, in order to save

her life from her husband and his companions. The police even supported her to reach the *darulaman*. Najia, (20) reached the police station all alone when her sister told her that the male members of her family had joined forces to kill her. Najia told me that within an hour, her kinsmen had approached her at the police station but the police officer there asked for her consent. She did meet them, but after her refusal she was not forced by the police to go back with her male relatives. These female participants admired the role of the police and the important point is that no female participant had reported anything against the police. These two findings, family support and the responsiveness of the police to the alleged *karis*, are new phenomena which reveal a sense of hope for change and that a new rational approach is taking place in this society and concerned people have started thinking that these allegations might be wrong and that they should support helpless women.

Additionally, women from a rural society, who are expected to blindly follow the traditional norms and values without saying a word about right or wrong, spoke explicitly against the unjust system in order to raise their voices against it. There are multiple comments and gestures reported in this study which show how desperately women want to end this illogical and crucial violence concerning honour. But despite the huge amount of rage, anger and sorrow about what these women were facing, they would never have dared to speak of their feeling within their own community because they still felt constrained about raising a voice or speaking out against this systematic violence. They made it clear to me, however, that beneath that imposed silence, they refused to accept the present honour-based violence that does not give them any right to prove their innocence. These women asked many questions that need to be answered. Many female participants asked me to think logically about why men are being treated honourably after selling their wives, daughters, sisters and mother a number of times and collecting millions from their buyers? Noori asked how, after taking money from a *karo*, men's honour slumbers and they still feel honourable. Moomal (18) angrily said that 'The Sindhis sell and buy innocent girls, aged twelve and thirteen, use them as concubines, tear their bodies and then call them *kari* and either kill them or sell them to become rich.' I was surprised when these women said that God is for men only and therefore all the laws on earth also favour men. Being offended, they asked me if I could redefine the meanings and concepts associated to the word honour. I was surprised and impressed to see their resistance against this unjust system.

These strong feelings were not limited to the women who had been threatened with death; Ameer (38) also sensed the system's cruel consequences. He tried his best not to kill a man in the name of honour but eventually he had to as all the stakeholders of the culture did not support his peaceful efforts, and instead he became a target of mockery at one point. After the killing and after facing some nominal imprisonment, he concluded that 'Killings in the name of honour could be avoided but so far it is next to impossible because the *waderas* and *Sardars* of area run the system and *waderas*' words are the final authority'.

After a careful analysis of the stories of both the women and the men, I was struck by the power of traditional and religious concepts of honour and the requirement that these placed on men to rescue their tarnished honour through bloodshed. Majid (36) proudly admitted that he walks around honourably and not cowardly. People respect him. If he had not killed he would never have been able to live with honour. Moreover, men's religio-social image of being guardian, supporter and provider, as well as superior to women and the controller of women's actions, encourage them to exercise their rights over women, including through violence, which enables them to gain domestic and social power. Thus, committing violence in the name of honour is central to their conception of manhood. In order to strengthen and maintain the hierarchy of power, men only accuse their kinswomen and not their kinsmen, as the notion of honour is widely associated with the character of women. Furthermore, these allegations, whether true or false, place women in a highly vulnerable position and completely trap them in a situation in which they have no opportunity to prove their innocence. Because of this one-sided power that honour places in the hands of men, kinsmen's authoritative position is supported and women's lives remain at risk. However, the analysis of my data reveals that, along with the elements discussed above, the mechanisms that contribute to the patriarchal culture in this part of the world are manifold. My study findings confirm those of previous studies, which found that the major reason for the perpetuation of killings under the pretext of honour is the killers' immunity from the law.

In Pakistan, despite small alterations in the laws related to honour killing, the present laws not only allow the provision of blood money as compensation for the honour murderer but also permit a sane *wali* to waive the right of retaliation (to compromise with the killer) (*see* Chapter One). Thus, the prosecution process favours the perpetrators. In fact, the present law relating to honour killing is not only defended but also encouraged by many members of the Pakistani

Parliament as well as the Provincial and National Assemblies, largely because the whole machinery from the senate to the lower house consists of the leaders of religious parties and tribal lords (*see* Chapter Two).

My analysis of the narratives shows that the main beneficiaries of honour murders are the tribal leaders, who shield the murderers, protecting them from being arrested and other consequences. Generally, in the *jirga*, murderers are always justified and the *kari* and *karo* (whether already murdered or still alive) are considered guilty. In cases where they are still alive, an accused man (*karo*) has to pay a fine in the form of cash and a woman or women in order to save his life, and the accused woman has to be sold by the *wadera*. The narrations of the female interviewees clarified that the *wadera* is not interested in older *kari* women as they are not profitable. Hence, either way, *waderas* receive the greatest benefits from honour killings and accusations, as they are the ones who receive and distribute the cash among the offended parties (consisting of the men who either killed or accused a person or couple). Thus, landlords, being the greatest beneficiaries of the system, call upon the name of tradition and do not vote for change in assemblies. In prisons, the killers who denied the murders said that they had been arrested because they had rebelled and refused to enslave their families to work on *waderas'* land. Hence, the *waderas'* role appears to strengthen the *status quo* by keeping common men uneducated, powerless and poor, and by encouraging them to defend their violent tribal customs and values. The result is perpetual poverty, gender discrimination and a strong feudal structure in which oppressed people are deprived of their basic rights.

The recent data about honour killing in this region demonstrate that the number of murdered *karos* is becoming lesser than the number accused. A report in *Kawish* (28 February 2012) shows that, in 2011, human rights groups reported 720 honour killings in Sindh, in which 605 women and 115 men were killed. The *Pakistan Tribune* (10 March 2013) reports that 'During the year 2012 as many as 714 people, including 571 women and 143 men, were killed to save honour across the province of Sindh'. The in its 2013 report put the number of women killed for 'honour' for that year alone at 869 (*The Express Tribune*, 13 February 2015). The current report of *HRCP*, published in *Kawish* (25 February 2016) declares that in 2015 in Pakistan, 1066 cases of honour killings were reported in which 902 women (including 109 underage girls) and 164 men were killed. These data show that the numbers of killed women are far greater than those of the killed men in the cases of honour killing. My participants'

accounts suggest three other modes of *karo-kari*: a kinswoman is killed as a *kari* but the *karo* is only accused; the couple are accused but not killed; a man is killed as a *karo* and a kinswoman is only accused. The question is: why is a *kari* killed if accusing her is more beneficial than killing her? There are a few possible answers to this. First, it is risky, as sometimes proving the infidelity of the couple is difficult. Second, a killed *kari* is used as strong evidence against the accused *karo* and therefore some prefer to kill a kinswoman by calling her *kari* to strengthen the case against the suspected *karo*. However, if the *karo* is killed, the likelihood of receiving money from his family becomes much less. In this case, the only hope of earning money is to sell the *kari*, if she is young.

The analysis of my data shows that even though the murders were always given the name of honour killings, they were not solely driven by the tribal tradition of saving the honour of the family or tribe. The study revealed that my female participants were not accused as a result of immoral actions that invoked men's subtle sense of honour but because their weak social, financial and legal position made them easy prey for their kinsmen. The pretexts of tradition, culture and religion are excuses to condone the violence, which is further supported and reinforced by the anti-women ordinances and their implementation by law enforcement agencies and tribal leaders.

Through my research, I have discovered something that was not previously known. I suggest that the motivation for honour killing is changing. Murders in the name of honour are not solely based on honour-related issues. Men are becoming more focused on greed. Through my female interviewees' narratives, it is visible that killings can be bound up with economic motives and interests. All my thirteen female participants explicitly elucidated the financial and social motives that lay behind the accusations of their kinsmen. None of the male interviewees, however, revealed anything in this regard except for one, who admitted that he had had some dispute with the man whom he had killed as *karo* over a piece of land.

My data show that these negative conditions are primarily the result of wider structural factors beyond the control of common people. What kind of attitude and actions can one expect from people who were brought up with ten or twelve siblings in acute poverty, started toiling as young as five and have faced discrimination and violence since their childhood? Poverty leads to corruption and crime. Honour-related violence is exacerbated by poverty and harsh

circumstances. Thus, it could be argued that, in upper Sindh, with the help of the entrenched religious and tribal norms of saving honour by bloodshed, the law of the state, and the legal and judicial institutions that prosecute cases of honour crimes, another strong element that is responsible for the rising number of killings is that on the whole, rich men try to get richer, but poor men try to improve their lives a little bit – albeit by oppressing those lower in the hierarchy than themselves.

In Pakistan the laws and rules are defined from a masculine perspective. Certainly women are the greatest sufferers from this social, legal and institutional setup. Despite some attempts being made by the various democratic governments to elevate the status of women in rural Sindh, the situation is not promising and it requires a major change in terms of making common people's and women's lives better. Anyone who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without a feminist upheaval. Social progress can be measured by the social position of women. The following steps might help to change the situation for the better.

There is an urgent need in Pakistan for strong measures to be taken against domestic violence in order to save the lives of hundreds of innocent women and men in this country. Changing the most controversial ordinances, that is, the *Hudood Ordinance* (1979) and the *Qisas and Diyat Ordinances* (1990), which provide immunity to killers who kill under the pretext of law, is most urgently required. To treat *karo-kari* as a non-compoundable and unpardonable offence is fundamental. Not only are changes to the present anti-humanitarian laws required, but also the strict implementation of the new laws to stop killing in the name of honour is obligatory. Otherwise, the laws will remain ineffective, as had happened in the cases of the *waderas' jirga* system. Although the Sindh High Court imposed a ban on the holding of *jirgas*, trials of *karo-kari* are still being conducted under the tribal justice system in which accused women have no redress but their killers are compensated. The strict implementation of the laws against honour killing would automatically stop the tribal judicial system (*jirga*) that has so far been a huge source of income for the *sardars* and *waderas*.

There should be more shelter houses with proper food and health facilities where abused women can gain access without waiting at a police station to have a letter of permission from the court. Sooner or later, the women have to leave the shelters with any of their relatives. In

most cases, women have to opt for the lesser evil because of the lack of any alternative. When the women are taken back, they are either killed or sold. So, the whole long efforts which they made to save their lives are all in vain and they are trapped back in the same circle again by the same hands. This is the area where NGOs and other social and human rights organisations need to work. The urgent need is that once the women have reached a shelter, the state should be responsible for their wellbeing and safety. Initiatives need to be taken by the government and by non-governmental organizations to help women to become independent by giving them work opportunities and small loans for establishing businesses. Women's independence can help to eliminate further marginalisation.

The state should take the issue of women's safety as an emergency decision. An awareness programme about the menace of honour killing should be introduced at various levels from various platforms. Journalists and writers need to work to revise the abstract meaning and concept of the word 'honour' when it is associated with female conduct; with a motive that there is no honour in killing. The situation will not improve until people believe that violence against women is a crime against humanity and that anti-feminist attitudes are in fact anti-humanitarian. Instead of *madrassahs*, schools should be opened. The syllabus should be based on rationality and humanity. Laws should be passed making education compulsory for both genders. Teachers need to teach boys to respect girls in their schools. If this can happen, and if the issues of poverty and the burden of the culture of cruelty can be effectively addressed, then there will be hope that future generations will be able to live without the terrible legacy of killing for the sake of a misplaced sense of honour.

Appendix A: A Letter From Barrister Ghumro.

ZAMIR & MALIK
Barristers & Legal Consultants

To,
Professor Stevi Jackson
Centre for Women's Studies
University of York
Heslington YO10 5DD
United Kingdom

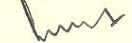
Subject: Legal basis of the Chapters II of the PhD thesis on 'Honour Killing in Sindh (Pakistan)'

Dear Madam/Sir,

This is to confirm that I have carefully and minutely gone through the matter written about the laws and their interpretation relating to the killing/murder in Pakistan. I was told that this is the chapter II of the research thesis 'Honour Killing in Sindh (Pakistan)' written by Mrs Shahanz Begum Laghari who is enrolled at your prestigious department from 1/10/2011 as a PhD researcher.

I can confirm that the material has been properly selected and its legal basis is founded on the interpretation of various judgments pronounced by Pakistani Courts. I do certify that legal basis of the material is correct and as per legal position obtaining in Pakistan. Honour Killing is a sensitive human rights issue and Shahnaz has dealt it in correct legal perspective.

Sincerely,


Zamir Ghumro
Barrister-at-law

Dated: 29/06/12

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Appendix B: Characteristics of Female Participants.

<i>No:</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Caste</i>	<i>Siblings</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Alleged by</i>
1:	Naheed	25	Bur-ro	4	Married	Husband
2:	Shabana	18	Aagani	3	Married	Husband
3:	Nazia	26	Mastoi	8	married	Husband
4:	Fatima	55	Janori	13	married	Husband
5:	Shahadat	30	Shar	13	married	Husband
6:	Noori	48	Jaskani	8	married	Husband
7:	Moomal	18	Malik	6	married	Husband
8:	Tasleem	21	Panhwar	13	married	Brothers
9:	Najia	20	Khaskli	11	married	Husband
10:	Aasiya	23	Khaskli	7	married	Husband
11:	Nayab	22	Bhutter	7	married	Brother
12:	Anjum	27	Khuwaja	9	married	Husband
13:	Perveen	27	Khoro	11	married	Husband

Appendix C: Characteristics of Male Participants.

<i>No:</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Caste</i>	<i>Siblings</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Killed</i>
1:	Siknadar	83	Aagani	5	Married	wife
2:	Majid	36	Baloch	7	Married	wife with a man
3:	Yaseen	37	Rind	7	Married	cousin with a man
4:	Hayat	22	Rind	6	Married	cousin with a man
5:	Ishtiak	26	Baloch	11	Married	cousi- n
6:	Ameer	38	Baloch	9	Married	a boy
7:	Tarik	29	Lohar	7	Married	wife with a man
8:	Naseer	65	Baloch	11	Married	wife with a man
9:	Sharif	16	Shaikh	9		a man
10:	Ghulam	26	Mangi	3	Married	Denies
11:	Fayaz	22	Mugal	8	Married	Denies
12:	Zahid	45	Kori	12	Married	Denies
13:	Anees	34	Korai	13	Married	Denies

Appendix D: Biographical Sketches of the Female Interviewees.

1: Naheed

Naheed (25) had married four years earlier with Ghulam Rasool and they had no children. She was called *kari* by her husband and therefore has been sent to the Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She had not decided anything yet, however, she needed to live in the *darulaman* until protection is provided by the court. She was a determined woman who saw ‘killing’ as a ‘routine’ business in Sindh. She used the word ‘friend’, an unusual word to be used by a woman for a man. The interview with her took one hour and fourteen minutes.

2: Shabana

Shabana was eighteen. Her father had died before her birth. Her mother was sold (married to another tribe for money by her paternal grandparents). She had one sister and one brother. She had left home with her cousin after her forced engagement to a man for money. She had been contacted and taken back by the *wadera* of the village. Her grandparents had forcibly married her three months earlier. She was scared of being killed as *kari* so she had taken shelter at the Larkana *darulaman*. She was determined to divorce her present husband and marry her cousin. Her interview was one hour and 21 minutes long.

3: Nazia

Nazia (26) was the daughter of a small land-holder and had three sisters and four brothers. She was having a good life at her parents’ home until her father became an addicted gambler. After selling his land and home, he sold his two eldest daughters for money and later Nazia was also sold for RS45,000 to her paternal cousin. She was accused as *kari* by her husband after five years of married life. She has no children. First she went to the Karachi *darulaman*. Now she was in the Larkana *darulaman*. She needed to live in the *darulaman* until her divorce. She was looking for protection from the court. Her interview was one hour and 23 minutes long.

4: Fatima

Fatima (55) was brought up as an orphan. She had seven sisters and five brothers. Her husband’s name was Bux Janori and they had five children. She was called *kari* by her husband and therefore sent to the Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She was unable to decide anything except to obtain a divorce from her husband. She had no lawyer to fight her case.

She was worried about her protection in case of leaving the *darulaman*. She was clearly very gloomy, upset and sick and needed to receive medical support. The interview took one hour and 23 minutes.

5: Shahadat

Shahadat (30) was the daughter of a farmer. She had six sisters and six brothers. She was married in exchange for another girl and the girl was given to her uncle in marriage. Her husband's name was Israr and they had four children who were with her in the *darulaman*. Her brother and brother-in-law had killed a man and alleged her as *kari* and therefore she had been sent to Larkana *darulaman* by the court. She wanted to live with her husband and requested protection from the court. She was determined to go with her husband and not with her father. She was offended and asked me if I could redefine the meaning of honour. The interview lasted one hour and 28 minutes.

6: Noori

Noori (48) had four sisters and three brothers. She was married in exchange for another girl and the girl was given to her brother in marriage. Her husband was a farmer but now he worked as a contractor. They had three daughters and five sons. Her thirteen-year-old twin boys were crippled. No child was with her in the *darulaman*. Her husband had called her *kari* and accused another man as *karo* so she had been sent to Sukker *darulaman* by the court, many months earlier. No relative had so far come to meet her. She was longing for freedom to see her children. She was diabetic, upset and asked for justice and protection but saw no hope of fairness. The interview lasted one hour and 22 minutes.

7: Moomal

Eighteen-year-old Moomal's father had worked as a farmer. She had three sisters and two brothers. When she was twelve, her father had died and her maternal grandfather had sold her mother for RS50,000 in some other village. Her mother had been accused as *kari* by some of her cousins. When Moomal became thirteen, she was given to a 50-year-old man in marriage. Her husband worked as a farmer but was addicted to drugs and gambling. She had no children. She was a target of physical and mental abuse by her in-laws and eventually her husband and a brother-in-law called her *kari*. Consequently, she was sent to the Sukker *darulaman*. Her

mother had tried to help her. She needed a divorce and wanted to go to her mother. She desired to live a peaceful life. The interview's duration was one hour and 21 minutes.

8: Tasleem

Tasleem (21) was fluent in Urdu and Seraiki. Her father worked as a gardener. She had four sisters and eight brothers. Hers was a very complex story, she told me. She asked me if her life story makes her *kari* or criminal. She did not know whether she had violated any *Sharia* or Islamic law. She was married but her brother had killed the man she was living with. She had a one-year-old son with her in the Sukker *darulaman*. She did not know about her future. She said that she was too simple to understand the world and its politics. She wondered if any court in the world could do justice in her case. The interview took two hours and 36 minutes.

9: Najia

Najia was twenty years old. Her father was paralysed and she had five sisters and five brothers. She had been married three years earlier to her paternal cousin Ali. They had no children. Her husband's physical torture of her had made her ill. She was caught while she was talking to her boyfriend over a cell phone. Subsequently, she was called *kari* by her husband, brothers and other relatives. She escaped and eventually reached the Sukker *darulaman*. She was determined to divorce her husband and marry someone of her own choice. She was, however, aggressive about why authorizations are only specified to men and enquired about the existence of God. She had grievances against the laws which do not let women choose a life partner for themselves. The interview took one hour and eleven minutes.

10: Aasiya

Aasiya (23) had two sisters and four brothers. Her father rode a horse and cart. At the age of sixteen, she had been married in a girl for girl exchange and had no children. Her in-laws abused her. She suffered from asthma. She admitted her contacts with a man. Her in-laws and husband wanted to kill her as *kari*. She ran from home and reached the Sukker *darulaman*. She was determined to divorce her husband and was sure that her boyfriend would marry her. She was a happy, joyful and carefree person and laughed at the persistent concept of honour. The interview lasted one hour and eighteen minutes.

11: **Nayab**

Nayab (22) was a daughter of a woodcutter. She had five sisters and five brothers. Seven years earlier, she had married her paternal cousin in a girl for girl exchange. Her brother had married with the exchanged girl cousin. She has no children. Her brother and the *wadera* had accused her as *kari* but her husband had denied the accusation. She had escaped death and reached the Sukker *darulaman*. She would like to go and live with her husband but she was scared and said, 'The *wadera* knows I'm beautiful and young, he will keep selling me off from one to another by calling me *kari*'. Her interview lasted an hour and twelve minutes.

12: **Anjum**

Anjum (27) was the daughter of a small landowner who had two wives. From both wives he had three daughters and five sons. She had married Ata, a labourer, in a girl for girl exchange. They had four children. Two of her children were with her at the Sukker *darulaman* and two were with their father. A dacoit burgler had entered her home at night so her husband accused her as *kari*. The police sent her to the Sukker *darulaman*. She cried and wept and called her husband 'the most dishonourable pimp who does not understand what honour actually is'. The interview was one hour and fifteen minutes long.

13: **Perveen**

Perveen (27) had six sisters and four brothers. After the death of her father (a small landowner), she had been forced to marry a 50-year-old paternal cousin in a girl for girl exchange. She had two daughters but they were not with her at the Hyderabad *darulaman*. She was being beaten by her husband and in-laws from the first day of her marriage and threatened with *talaque* (divorce). Ultimately she was accused as *kari* by her husband. She had left her home and had reached the Hyderabad *darulaman*. She seemed very disturbed and depressed. She cried and wept for her daughters and showed her concern for their security. The interview was about one hour and fifteen minutes long.

APPENDIX E: Biographical Sketches of the Male Interviewees.

1: Sikandar

Sikandar (83) could recite the Qur'an. His farmer father had died when Sikandar was eight years old. He had two brothers and two sisters. He had married his first cousin at a very young age. He killed his pregnant wife when his mother-in-law told him that his wife was *kari*. He had one son from the wife he killed, but the son died later. He went to jail for life imprisonment but was later released. He married for a second time and now had eight sons and two daughters. He said that the friendship of train, hospital and jail was everlasting. At his age, he felt sorry and did not see any honour or humanity in honour killing. The interview was conducted in Larkana and lasted an hour and eleven minutes.

2: Majid

Majid (36) had passed secondary level. His father was a bus driver. He had three brothers and three sisters. He worked as a taxi driver and married in 2007 after paying RS80,000 to the bride's parents. They had no children. In 2011, he came home late at night unexpectedly and found his bedroom locked. He kicked the door open and when saw his wife with another man, he opened fire on both of them. For these killings he had never been arrested. He believed that his act was in accordance with Islam and *Sharia* law. He felt that evil deeds invite disaster and that if he had not killed them he would not have been able to move in the society honourably. His interview at a hotel in Jacobabad was one hour and fourteen minutes long.

3: Yaseen

Yaseen (36) did his matriculation in 1996. His father had fifteen acres of land, which was now being looked after by him. He had three brothers and four sisters. He was married in 1999 to his paternal uncle's daughter and they had one daughter and one son. He cut the throats of his cousin (a paternal uncle's daughter) and the suspect boy with a sharp dagger. He admitted that he previously had a land dispute with the slain boy. After the killing, he had run to Baluchistan. Upon the *sardar*'s instruction, he handed himself over to the police. Meanwhile, the *sardar* decided the case and the slain boy's relatives changed their statements before the court and Yaseen had been released from jail. He said, 'Who can challenge *sardar*'s *faislo* [decision]?' I conducted his interview in a Jacobabad hotel and it was one hour and fourteen minutes long.

4: Hayat

Hayat (22) had two brothers and three sisters. His father had died when Hayat was five years old. He started toiling from his childhood to earn a livelihood for his family. He had killed his cousin (a paternal uncle's daughter) and the suspect man. After the killings, he and the brother of the killed girl went home and informed their elders. Their elders were happy and praised them for repeating the great saga of Baluchi nation. He went to the police with his weapon and faced nine months imprisonment. In the meantime, *faislo* was made by the *sardar* and he was freed. He felt that if he had not killed them he would not have been able to move in the society honourably. This interview is also conducted at a hotel in Jacobabad and was about an hour and eighteen minutes long.

5: Ishtiak

Ishtiak (26) had passed secondary level. His father had been a policeman and now looked after his land. He had six brothers and four sisters. He had killed his sixteen-year-old cousin (a paternal uncle's daughter) in 2007 when she left her home. She was returned home and she admitted that she wanted to run away with a boy. She was given some drugs (available easily everywhere in the country) in tea. When she became unconscious after taking the tea, she was strangled with her own scarf. He said that was a correct Balochi punishment for such a crime. The suspect man had not been seen since then but Ishtiak was sure to find him sooner or later as the world is not too big to hide him. This interview also took place in a Jacobabad hotel and lasted an hour and nineteen minutes.

6: Ameer

Ameer was (38). His father was in a trivial government job. He had three brothers and five sisters. He had been in the district hockey team and used to play at the positions of fullback and goalkeeper. He had married his paternal uncle's daughter and they had three sons and one daughter. Before killing his cousin (who accepted illicit relations with his sister) in a market, he had tried to request the boy's family to let them get married. The boy's parents had refused the option and insulted him. He had spent seven years in jail. Later with the help of the area *sardar*, he had been released from jail. He felt that the honour-related issues are not impossible to resolve and that killings are not the only option, but that education is essential to normalise the system. This interview was also conducted in a hotel in Jacobabad and lasted one hour and 26 minutes.

7: Tarik

Tarik (29) had four brothers and two sisters. His father worked as a farmer. He had been captain of his village's cricket team. After matriculating, he had left his studies due to poverty. He married his paternal aunt's daughter in 1997 and they had three sons and one daughter. He had killed his wife and her boyfriend and then gone to the police. The police had kept him on remand three times. Eventually, upon the intervention of the *sardar*, the issue was sorted out and he had been released from jail. He had obtained admission to education again at year nine and was now pursuing graduation. He had married again. This interview was also conducted in a hotel in Jacobabad and was one hour and thirty minutes long.

8: Naseer

Naseer (65) had three brothers and seven sisters. His father had first worked as a farmer and had then started a dairy farm. He had married his paternal uncle's daughter 35 years earlier in a girl for girl exchange. They had three sons and four daughters. He had killed his wife and her man friend with his pistol in an inn. In his opinion, an honourable man is supposed to react according to the Islamic teaching to not to be ashamed on the Day of Judgment. He had handed himself in to the police. He had been in the jail for four years. He felt sad when he thought of his deteriorated family life and his lost business. This interview was conducted at the District Jail in Jacobabad and was one hour and 27 minutes long.

9: Sharif

Sharif (16) ran away from school in year four after being beaten up by one of his schoolteachers. His father was paralysed. He had five brothers and three sisters. He used to work at someone's house as a servant. He had killed a man after seeing him in an obscene position with his elder brother's wife (the daughter-in-law of his paternal uncle). He had tried to kill the woman as well but his shot missed and he did not have any more bullets. He believed that he had committed the act in accordance with Qur'anic teaching. He was satisfied that he had performed his duty honourably. He was a little worried about his parents' well-being otherwise jail seemed fine as he liked the food in the jail, but the electricity failures bothered him. This interview was also conducted in Jacobabad District Jail and lasted for one hour and nineteen minutes.

10: **Ghulam**

Ghulam (26) was a married man with an impaired limb. He had a three-year-old son and an eleven-month-old daughter. His father was also in jail with him. Both his siblings were deceased. His sister had married his paternal uncle's son but when she died, his uncle asked for money with a plea that the girl had died and since Ghulam's father was supposed to give a girl, he was asked either to give one girl or money for his son to remarry. Ghulam denied killing his uncle's son and asserted that his uncles had lodged the FIR against him and his father for grasping their piece of land. He wept and cried that his mother and wife were alone with two young children. This interview was also conducted in Jacobabad District Jail and lasted for one hour and fourteen minutes.

11: **Fayaz**

Fayaz (22) had worked as a shepherd in his childhood. His father was in some insignificant government job. His father had two wives and Fayaz had four brothers and three sisters. He now produced rice from his seven acres of land. He had married at the age of eighteen his paternal uncle's daughter with a commitment to give his newborn baby girl to his uncle. Now he was the father of one daughter and two sons. He denied killing his brother's wife and claimed that she had committed suicide by shooting herself in the head and that his enemies had entered his name in the FIR. This interview also took place in the Jacobabad District Jail and lasted one hour and eighteen minutes.

12: **Zahid**

Zahid (45) was facing life imprisonment on the charges of double murder. His father was a farmer and he had eight brothers and three sisters. He had worked as labourer at different places. He had married in a girl for girl exchange and had one daughter and one son. He was arrested with his father and after giving a bribe of RS70,000 to the police they were released, but were then arrested again. He denied killing his brother's wife and the other man and called it a conspiracy of the landowners of his area. He claimed that he had confessed to the killings after third degree torture. He had been convicted and sent to jail for life by the court. His interview also took place in Jacobabad District Jail and was one hour and eighteen minutes long.

13: **Anees**

Anees (34) had six brothers and six sisters. His father was a policeman. After passing intermediate level education, he had passed a test at the Sukkur Academy Artillery Centre and was enlisted in the army. During the training, he had received news that his wife had been killed. He was arrested as soon as he reached home. He denied killing his wife and said that the landowners of his area had taken revenge on him for an old enmity. He was asked by the police to pay a large bribe to be released but he had nothing to pay it with. He claimed that third degree torture had made him confess and to become a convicted killer. He said that the jails are filled with innocent people but that criminals and killers are enjoying freedom. This interview also took place in Jacobabad District Jail and was one hour and sixteen minutes long.

Glossary

<i>Aapa</i>	Respected sister.
<i>actus rea</i>	A criminal act.
<i>Ada</i>	Brother.
<i>Addo-baddo</i>	Exchange a girl for a girl.
<i>Adi</i>	Sister.
<i>Ahl-e-Bait</i>	Family of the prophet.
<i>Amman</i>	Mother.
<i>Ammar</i>	Mother.
<i>Aqeedah</i>	Beliefs.
<i>Assalam-u-alaikum</i>	Peace be upon you.
<i>Badl-e-sulh</i>	In lieu of peace.
<i>Bajee</i>	Elder sister.
<i>Baloch</i>	People belong to Baluchistan (one of the main nations of Pakistan).
<i>Bari</i>	Gifts in a form of jewellery, clothes and other items from bride's family for the bride.
<i>Bhajaee</i>	Brother's wife.
<i>Bharwo</i>	Pimp
<i>Burqa</i>	A long, loose stitched garment/clad covering the whole body of a woman.
<i>Chardiwari</i>	Four walls of a house.
<i>Chader</i>	A large sheet of cloth to cover, head, face and body.
<i>Charpae</i>	Sindhi bed.

<i>Chattee</i>	A Fine.
<i>Dadi</i>	Paternal Grandmother.
<i>Dair</i>	Husband's brother (brother-in-law).
<i>Darulaman</i>	Refuge/Shelter home.
<i>Deeni madrassah</i>	Religious school.
<i>Diyat</i>	The financial compensation paid to the victim or heirs of a victim in the cases of murder.
<i>Dohi</i>	A proven offender.
<i>Dupatta</i>	A long scarf type cloth-sheet to cover head and breast and to wrap body (for women).
<i>Ehteram-e-Ramadan</i>	Reverence of Fasting.
<i>Eid</i>	One of the religious festivals in Islam.
<i>Faislo</i>	A decision taken in a <i>jirga</i> .
<i>Garhee</i>	Not offender (opposite of <i>kari</i>).
<i>Ghairat</i>	Honour.
<i>Had</i>	The limit or prohibition/ punishment for zina under Islamic law.
<i>Hadith</i>	Saying/tradition of the Prophet (PBUH).
<i>Haq mehr</i>	Dower given to a bride from her bridegroom.
<i>Haque</i>	A right thing.
<i>Haque Bakhsh</i>	Waiver from the right to marry (Marriage with the Qur'an).
<i>Hari</i>	Peasant.
<i>Haveli</i>	Palatial type of house.
<i>Hudood</i>	Limits or restrictions.
<i>Izzat</i>	Dignity.
<i>Jahad</i>	Fighting in the name of God.

<i>Jahez</i>	Dower, dowry
<i>Jauhar</i>	Ability (the act of self-immolation).
<i>Jirga</i>	Tribal court (illegal in Pakistan).
<i>Kalashankov</i>	Weapon.
<i>Kalima</i>	A word or noun is uncountable
<i>Kari</i>	A fallen, adulteress blackened woman.
<i>Karo</i>	A fallen, adulterer blackened man.
<i>Karo-Kari</i>	<i>Karo-Kari</i> is an act of murder, in which a person is killed for his or her actual or perceived immoral behavior.
<i>Khair</i>	Agreement.
<i>Khata</i>	Accident.
<i>Mehram</i>	Close blood relative.
<i>mens rea</i>	Intention.
<i>Masoom-ud-dam</i>	Innocent.
<i>Moen-jo-daro</i>	Indus valley civilization.
<i>Molvi</i>	Islamic religious preacher.
<i>Muhajirs</i>	Immigrants.
<i>Muhsan</i>	Married.
<i>Nikah</i>	Marriage contract.
<i>Nizam-e-Mustafa</i>	Establishing an Islamic state.
<i>Otaque</i>	A living room for men only.
<i>Panah</i>	Shelter.
<i>Panchayat</i>	An illegal court.
<i>Pet likhi dean</i>	Writing a womb (agreeing to give away a child yet unborn).
<i>Phupho</i>	Paternal aunt, the sister of father.
<i>Qanun-e-Shahadat</i>	Blasphemy, the act of insulting or showing contempt for God.

<i>Qatl-e-amd</i>	Intentional murder.
<i>Qawam</i>	Authority.
<i>Qisas</i>	Retaliation.
<i>Rajam</i>	Stoning to death.
<i>Sahaba</i>	Companions of the prophet.
<i>Sahi</i>	Authentic.
<i>Sahi Bukhari & Sahi Muslim</i>	Two major authentic hadith collections.
<i>Salam</i>	An Arabic word, used for ‘Hello’.
<i>Sam</i>	To provide shelter or to keep somebody’s precious thing to be kept with care for some time.
<i>Sardar</i>	Tribal leader.
<i>Sati</i>	A chaste woman (the act of self-immolation).
<i>Sha’ar-i-Islam</i>	Islamic symbols.
<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic law.
<i>Shia</i>	One of the two main branches of Islam.
<i>Siah-kari</i>	Honour killing.
<i>Sindhi</i>	People belong to Sindh (one of the main nations of Pakistan).
<i>Sindhu</i>	Indus river.
<i>Sunnah</i>	The practices and saying of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
<i>Sunni</i>	One of the two main branches of Islam.
<i>Ta’zir</i>	Penalty.
<i>Talaque</i>	Divorce.
<i>Tano</i>	A Sindhi word for insinuation and insult mixed together.
<i>Taurtoora</i>	Honour killing

<i>Valvar</i>	Exchange for a set amount.
<i>Vikro</i>	Sell.
<i>Wadera</i>	Feudal leader.
<i>Wani</i>	Giving girls to someone for seeking pardon or peace.
<i>Wali</i>	An adult legal heir.
<i>Watta-satta</i>	Give and take, Exchanging girls in a girl for girl marriage.
<i>Zaat</i>	Caste.
<i>Zameen</i>	Land.
<i>Zamindar</i>	Landowner.
<i>Zan</i>	Women.
<i>Zar</i>	Wealth.
<i>Zina</i>	Adultery/ unlawful sexual relations between Muslims.

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