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DISHONOR KILLING: *"THE MECHANICS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN"*

SHER ZAMAN

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SHER ZAMAN : DISHONOR KILLING: *"THE MECHANICS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN". THESIS ADVISORS:* SUVAJEE GOOD, Ph.D., CHAIR, KEES WOUTERS, LL.M, MEMBER, SUWANNA SATHA-ANAND, Ph.D. MEMBER

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Honor killing is a cultural practice in Pakistani society where her family members punish a woman with death should she try to cross the boundaries of patriarchal and masculine values. The main purpose of the practice is to strengthen and maintain the hold of males over females within the family as well as in the community. The main objective of this paper is to explore those factors, which promote, or at least maintain the practice of honor killing even into the 21st century. One important question of the paper is why the perpetrators of honor killing often get a lesser punishment, or enjoy impunity in the legal system of Pakistan. For an understanding of the root causes, this paper first attempts to unveil the cultural, social and political roles of women in Pakistan. Then the links between women, and the notion of *"honor"* in the family is explored. Being a Muslim country, the paper deems it worthy to analyze the practice of honor killing vis-a-vis the religion of the majority in Pakistan. The most important part of this research is the throwing of light on the practice of honor killing in the legal context, and in this regard, the attitudes towards honor killing of Pakistan's Penal Code, judges and police is discussed. In the last part of the paper before the conclusion, honor killing is scrutinized in the perspective of international human rights standards. Commodification of women turns them into objects of family honor where they lack control over their own bodies and have no individual status. The long absence of democracy in Pakistan has not allowed women to attain a level of equality with men in the country. If such were the case, the practice of honor killing could be erased from Pakistan.

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