

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

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Volume 6 | Issue 1

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2023

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# Component of Honour in Honour Killing

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MEENACTCHI PRIYATHARSHINI R<sup>1</sup> AND PAVITHRAN S<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*The caste system is a part of Indian society, which traces its origin to centuries ago, which could not be defined as a single point. Along with this caste or varna system, culture, morality, and ethics also capture a major portion of Indian civilisation. According to this, killing a life is not the way of morals, but people do not hesitate to do the same when it comes to inter-caste marriage. They feel their honour is being disrespected, and they go to the extent of killing their own family members, keeping aside all their love and affection. But, the question of the research is, is only this caste forms the part of honour? And if they kill their own family members for inter-caste marriage, only then it amounts to honour killing?*

*So, for that, all those things which people think as a matter of honour and for which they go to the level of taking a life are to be analysed. This is empirical research in which the people's point of view about honour killing is analysed and defined accordingly. The probability of honour killing based on the economic standard of life is studied, and the reason for such crime is also analysed, for which one of the undeniable solutions to reduce honour killing becomes education.*

**Keywords:** Honour Killing, Economic, Caste, Varna.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Honour Killing is one of the evil practices present in this society. No common man has the right to take one's life. The killing of a relative, especially a girl or a woman, who is perceived to have brought dishonour to the family is said to be honour killing. This honour killing though it is said especially a girl or a woman, does not mean the killing of women is only honour killing. Any person who kills their relatives to secure his/her honour is termed honour killing. Though India has developed to an inconsiderable level since 1947, it is still a black mark on the part of the Indians to say that the conventional practice of killing someone for the sake of the honour of someone else is still existing. The right to kill one's own self for such reason is itself not guaranteed by our Constitution of India. Let us have a short analysis of people's points of view about honour killing.

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**(A) Review of literature**

1. The horrific case of “honour killing” in the capital, a 21-year-old final year student of Sri Venkateswara, a leading college in Delhi University’s south campus, was allegedly murdered by her family because she had married a boy from another caste and region.<sup>3</sup>
2. On Nov 16, 2014, an article published in Times of India states that Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have joined other 18 states to fight against the Centre to bring in new legislation for handling Honour Killing<sup>4</sup>.
3. An article in the Hindu, titled “Stamp out Kangaroo courts”, discussed the incident in Subalpur village in West Bengal’s Birbhum district, in which a 20-year-old tribal woman was gang-raped by a dozen men as punishment for alleged immoral conduct is shocking in its unimaginable brutality and points to a larger malaise<sup>5</sup>.
4. Sonal Srivastava, Student Amity Law School, Lucknow, writes about what honour killing is, its meaning, the possible reasons for honour killing and recent cases.<sup>6</sup>
5. A brief report on an important judgment of the Supreme Court of India is given, which has a bearing on human rights, is mentioned on the website, whose content was managed by National Human Rights Commission India.<sup>7</sup>
6. An article was published in The New Indian Express says that, Political parties in Tamil Nadu silent over the honour killing of an inter-caste couple.<sup>8</sup>
7. In the news UK website, an article on the topic, “HONOUR CRIMES What is an honour killing and how common are they in the UK?” says that thousands of people around the world - mostly women - are murdered in honour killings each year.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Raj Shekhar, *Parents held for ‘honour’ killing of 21-year-old Delhi University girl*, The Times of India (Nov 20, 2014, 12.09 IST), Parents held for 'honour' killing of 21-year-old Delhi University girl | Delhi News - Times of India (indiatimes.com)

<sup>4</sup>Himanshi Dhawan, *21 States, UTs join Centre in fight against honour killing*, The Times of India (Nov 16, 2014, 01:19 IST), 21 states, UTs join Centre in fight against honour killings | India News - Times of India (indiatimes.com)

<sup>5</sup> *Stamp out kangaroo courts*, The Hindu (January 25, 2014, 01:03 am IST), Stamp out kangaroo courts - The Hindu

<sup>6</sup> Sonal Srivastava, *What Are The Reasons for Honour Killing*, iPleaders (Mar 12, 2016), What Are The Reasons for Honour Killing - iPleaders

<sup>7</sup> National Human Rights Commission of India, *Important Judgment of the Supreme Court of India*, nhrc.nic.in, Important Judgment of the Supreme Court of India | National Human Rights Commission India (nhrc.nic.in)

<sup>8</sup> S Kumaresan, *Political parties in Tamil Nadu silent over honour killing of inter caste couple*, The New Hindu Express (Published: Nov 19, 2018, 02:11 am | Last Updated: Nov 19, 2018, 11:17 am), Political parties in Tamil Nadu silent over honour killing of inter caste couple- The New Indian Express

<sup>9</sup> Emma lake, *Honour Crimes What is an honour killing and how common are they in the UK?*, The Sun (Published : Sep 28, 2020, 17:05 | Updated : Sep 28, 2020, 21:32) What is an honour killing and how common are they in the UK? – The Sun | The Sun.

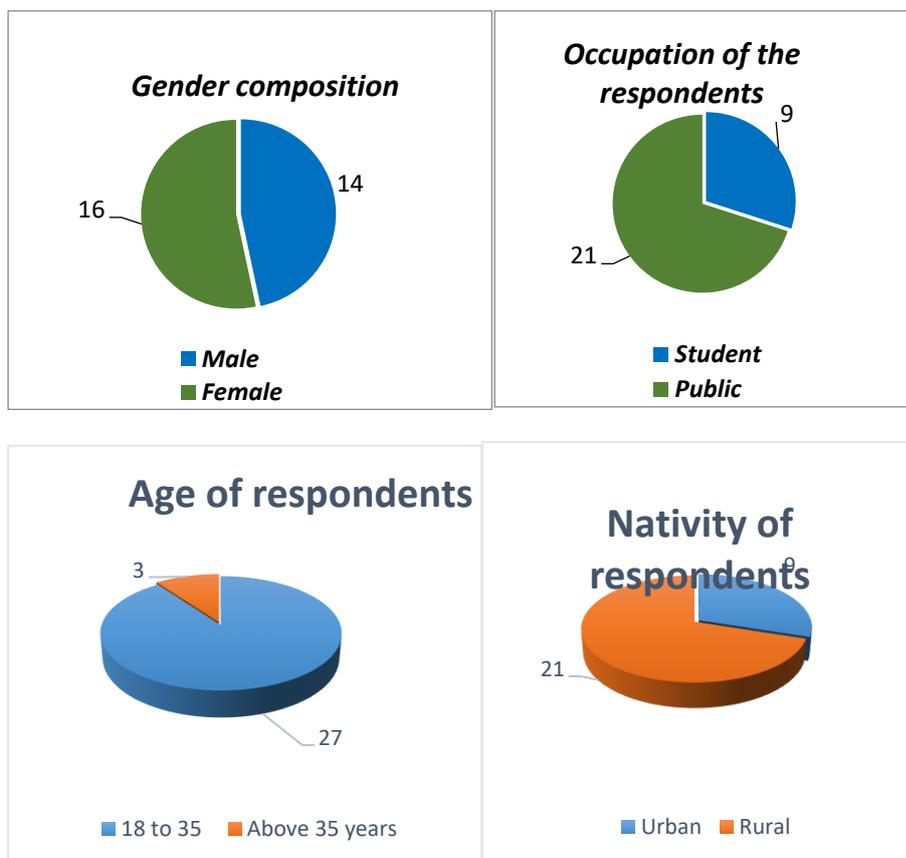
### (B) Objectives

1. To define honour killing
2. To find reasons for honour killing
3. To analyse the remedies for honour killing
4. To examine the current status of honour killing
5. To study the role of society and law in honour killing
6. To examine the role of honour killing in economics

### (C) Methodology

Both doctrinal and non-doctrinal methods of research have been used. A survey was conducted among 30 respondents, among which 9 are students and 21 are the general public. 14 of them are male, and 16 of them are female. 3 respondents are above the age of 35, whereas 27 of the respondents are within the age group of 18 to 35. In this research, 21 are from urban and 9 are from rural areas.

**Chart 1: Composition of the respondents**



**Table 1: Respondents composition**

		<i>Student</i>		<i>Public</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>18 to 35 years</i>	<i>above 35 years</i>	<i>18 to 35 years</i>	<i>above 35 years</i>	
<i>Rural area</i>	<i>Male</i>	4	0	1	0	5
	<i>Female</i>	1	0	2	1	4
<i>Urban area</i>	<i>Male</i>	2	0	6	1	9
	<i>Female</i>	2	0	9	1	12
<i>Total</i>		9	0	18	3	30

*Source: computed*

#### **(D) Significance**

1. My research finds the root cause of this evil disease, honour killing. It gives a thorough analysis of the legitimate remedies available and how far it is effective.
2. It says what society's view on honour killing is and how far society has changed from its conventional point of view.
3. The article says in detail about the opinion people have on honour killing, and it is very important to analyse the people's solution for this issue.

#### **(E) Limitations of the research**

1. The study period is very short which is only 3 months
2. The sample contains no respondents below the age of 18. Thus, the results are limited to be applied to people who are above the age of 18.
3. This sample space is of only 30, with which we cannot generalise this for entire India.
4. No victims are interviewed to give a point of view from the victims.

#### **(F) Hypothesis**

1. Most people believe that murder occurring due to any marital relationship is only honour killing
2. Most incidents of honour killing take place due to societal pressure, just to prove oneself in society.
3. The rate of honour killing, rather than decreasing, has increased after independence.

4. There are no sufficient laws to deal with honour killing
5. Though the supreme court has said honour killing is a rare of the rarest, the effect of the said statement is not being able to implement.

#### **(G) Analysis of the data**

From this table 2, we get clear that 13.33 percent of the respondents who are from a rural area suggest that honour killing is an act which is carried out due to social pressure, whereas 33.33 percent of the urban area said the same.

**Table 2: Respondents' view regarding what is honour killing**

<b>What is Honour Killing</b>	<b>Is it carried out to protect the honour of the girl and family?</b>	<b>Is it carried out to maintain norms and culture of the ethnic group</b>	<b>Something is carried out due to a social pressure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Rural</b>	3 (10.00)	2 (6.67)	4 (13.33)	9 (30.00)
<b>Urban</b>	4 (13.33)	7 (23.33)	10 (33.33)	21 (70.00)
<b>Total</b>	7 (23.33)	9 (30.00)	14 (46.67)	30 (100.00)

**Source: computed**

10.00 percent of the respondents from rural area say that honour killing is for the protection of the honour of the girl and the family, whereas 13.33 percent of the respondents who are from urban areas suggests it. 30.00 percent of the respondents suggest that the norms and culture of the ethnic group influence people to the act of honour killing. Both urban and rural people give priority to social pressure, which is the main reason for the act of honour killing

**Table 3: Respondent's view on whether one can take one's life**

<b>Whether one can take one's life</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Law has the right</b>	<b>Total</b>

<b>Rural</b>	0 (0.00)	7 (23.33)	2 (6.67)	9 (30.00)
<b>Urban</b>	2 (6.67)	13 (43.33)	6 (20.00)	21 (70.00)
<b>Total</b>	2 (6.67)	20 (66.67)	8 (26.67)	30 (100.00)

**Source: Computed**

66.67 percent of the respondents suggest that no one has the right to take one’s life. 26.67 percent of the respondents suggest that the law has the right to take one’s life. Surprisingly, 6.67 percent of the people who are from an urban area suggested that one has the right to take one is right.

**Table 4: Among whom honour killing is high**

	<i>Among people who live in good condition.</i>	<i>Among people who live in a middle-class family</i>	<i>Among people who are socially facing various problems and discrimination.</i>	<i>Among people who live below the poverty line</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Students</b>	2 (6.67%)	3 (10.00%)	3 (10.00%)	1 (3.33%)	9 (30.00%)
<b>Public</b>	3 (10.00%)	6 (20.00%)	10 (33.33%)	2 (6.67%)	21 (70.00%)
<b>Total</b>	5 (16.67%)	9 (30.00%)	13 (43.33%)	3 (10.00%)	30 (100.00%)

**Source: Computed**

33.33 percent of the respondents who are general public suggest that among people who are facing various problems socially and those who face discrimination, honour killing is high, whereas 10.00 percent of the respondents who are students suggest so. 30.00 percent of the respondents suggest that among people who live in a middle-class family, honour killing is high,

whereas 16.67 percent of them suggest that among people who live in good condition also, honour killing is high. 10.00 percent of the respondents say among people who live below the poverty- line, honour killing is high.

**Table 5: Steps for preventing honour killing**

<b>Steps for preventing honour killing</b>	<b>Education.</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Strict law</b>	<b>Unity</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	9 (30.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (30.00%)
<b>Public</b>	11 (36.67%)	4 (13.33%)	5 (16.67%)	1 (3.33%)	21 (70.00%)
<b>Total</b>	20 (66.67%)	4 (13.33%)	5 (16.67%)	1 (3.33%)	30 (100.00%)

**Source: Computed**

All the students, who are 30.00 percent of the respondents, suggest that education is very much needed for the people to prevent and provide honour killing. 36.67 percent of the people who are public suggest education is needed to prevent honour killing. 13.33 percent of the people who are public suggest that awareness among the people is needed to prevent honour killing.

5 percent of the people who are public suggest that strict law, whereas 3.33 percent of people suggest unity among people is needed to prevent honour killing.

**Table 6: There is a role of politics in honour killing**

<b>Politics play a role in honour killing</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Student</b>	4 (13.33%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (30.00%)
<b>Public</b>	8 (26.67%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (23.33%)	4 (13.33%)	2 (6.67%)	21 (70%)

<b>Total</b>	12 (40.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (30.00%)	7 (23.33%)	2 (6.67%)	30 (100.00%)
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**Source: Computed**

30.00 percent of the people are not sure whether there is any role for politics in an honour killing. 63.33 percent of the people agree that there is a role of politics in honour killing. 6.67 percent of the respondents disagreed that there is any role of politics in an honour killing. 16.67 percent of the respondents, who are students, suggest the statement that “Honour killing is carried out only by the dominant community”, whereas 10 percent of the respondents who are public agreed with the statement. 36.67 percent of the public have said the given statement is false, whereas, 16.67 percent of the respondents who are public have agreed the statement. 53.33 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement.

**Table 7: Honour killing is carried out only by the dominant community**

<b>Honour killing is carried out by dominant community</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	3 (10.00%)	5 (16.67%)	1 (3.33%)	9 (30.00%)
<b>Public</b>	5 (16.67%)	11 (36.67%)	5 (16.67%)	21 (70.00%)
<b>Total</b>	8 (26.67%)	16 (53.33%)	6 (20.00%)	30 (100.00%)

**Source: Computed**

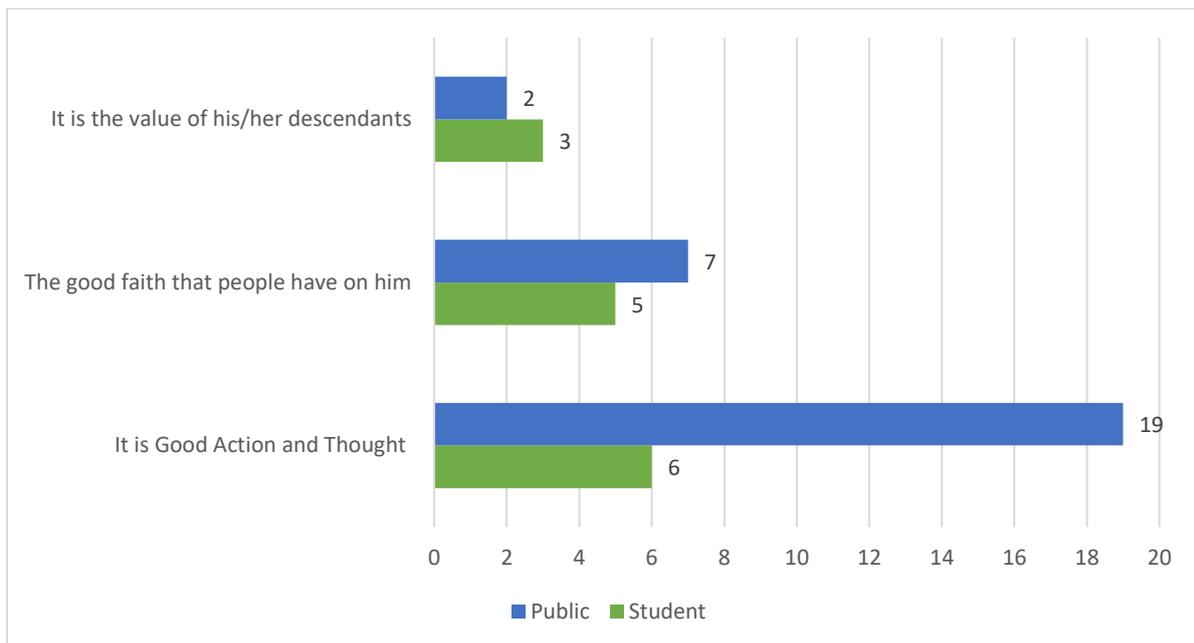
10.00 percent of the students suggest that honour killing is due to the reason that the person’s honour and dignity are being affected. 10.00 percent of the student respondents and 6.67 percent of the student respondents suggest caste issues and religious issues respectively, would be the reason for honour killing. 33.33 percent and 30.00 percent of the public respondents have suggested that affecting. One’s dignity and honour and caste issues respectively would be the reason for honour killing.

**Table 8: Immediate cause for honour killing**

<b>Immediate cause of honour killing</b>	<b>One's dignity and honour are being affected</b>	<b>Caste issues.</b>	<b>Religious issues.</b>	<b>Other differences</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>students</b>	3 (10.00%)	3 (10.00%)	2 (6.67%)	1 (3.33%)	9 (30.00%)
<b>Public</b>	10 (33.33%)	9 (30.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (6.67%)	21 (70.00%)
<b>Total</b>	13 (43.33%)	12 (40.00%)	2 (6.67%)	3 (10.00%)	30 (100.00%)

**Source: Computed**

**Chart 2: What is dignity and honour for a person**



83.33 percent of the respondents suggest that one's good faith and thoughts, decides one's dignity. 40.00 percent of the respondents suggests that the good faith that people have on a person is one's dignity. Whereas, 16.67 percent of the respondents have suggested that one's descents' value makes up one's dignity and honour. Thus, one's good faith and thoughts constitutes one's honour.

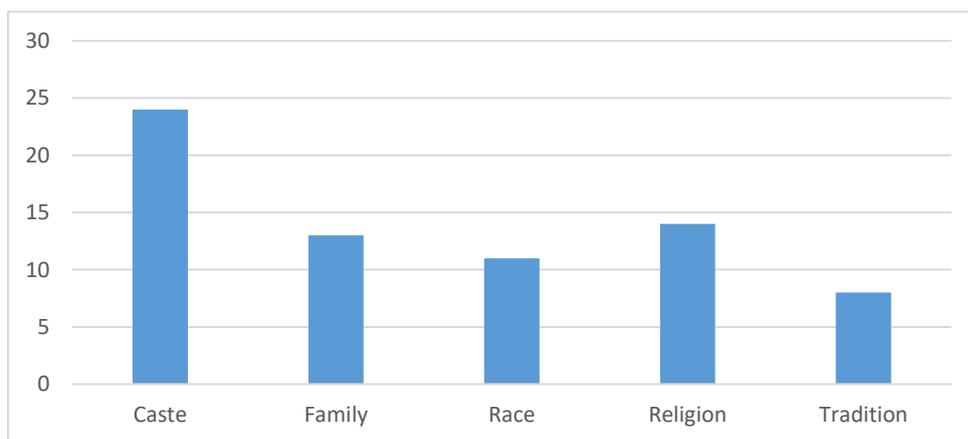
**Table 9: How one’s dignity is spoiled**

<i>How one's dignity is spoiled</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Ones’ own indecent activity</i>	9 (30.00%)	17 (56.67%)	26 (86.67%)
<i>people who are dependent on him</i>	0 (0.00%)	4 (13.33%)	4 (13.33%)
<i>Total</i>	9 (30.00%)	21 (70.00%)	30 (100.00%)

**Source: Computed**

13.33 percent of the people who are solely not students, suggests that people’s dignity is affected by the acts and functions of people who depend on him whereas, 86.67 percent of the respondent suggests that people’s dignity is affected by one’s own indecent activities, of which 56.67 percent of them are public and 30.00 percent are students.

**Chart 3: Reasons for honour killing**



80.00 percent of the respondents have suggested that caste is the important reason for honour killing. 46.67 percent of respondents say religion as one of the important reasons for honour killing. 43.33 percent of the respondents feel that family is the one of the important reasons for honour killing. 36.67 percent of the respondents suggest that honour killing is one of the reasons of honour killing whereas, 26.67 percent of them have suggested that one’s tradition is reason for honour killing. Thus, caste and religion are the major reasons for honour killing.

**Table 10: Respondents’ opinion about dignity**

<i>How to protect one's dignity</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Performing his/her duty properly</i>	16 (53.33%)	7 (23.33%)	13 (76.67%)
<i>Helping the needy.</i>	5 (16.67%)	2 (6.67%)	7 (23.33%)
<i>Total</i>	21 (70.00%)	9 (30.00%)	30 (100.00%)

*Source: Computed*

53.33 percent of the people who are publics, performing his/her duty properly is the right way to protect one's dignity whereas, 23.33 percent of the people who are student have suggested the same way. Helping the needy would be the right way to protect one's dignity was said by 16.67 percent of the publics and 6.67 percent of the students.

#### **(H)Major findings**

1. 46.67 percent of the respondents suggest that honour killing is something that is carried out due to a social pressure.
2. A very less amount of people, that too from urban area have suggested that 6.67 percent of the respondents have suggested that one has the right to take one's life. Though it is very less, it is to be eradicated.
3. From the respondents we can make sure that, among the middle-class people and all those discriminated people, honour killing is very high
4. Students suggest that education as the only way to prevent honour killing whereas, public suggest awareness, strict law and unity as other ways to prevent honour killing.
5. It is very sure that, most of the respondents believe that there is role of politics in honour killing.
6. The number of publics who have disagreed the statement that "honour killing is carried out only by the dominant community" is higher than that of the students who disagreed the said statement. This makes clear that student's maturity and experience is not to that extend of the other publics who are working basically above the age of 25.
7. The major reason for honour killing is that people feel that their dignity and honour has

been reduced as well as it is also due to caste issues.

8. One's good faith and thoughts constitute one's dignity and honour.
9. Students suggest that one's own indecent activity are the reason for spoiling the dignity and honour of a person. Performing one's own duty is one of the ways to protect one's own dignity. One of the most important reasons for honour killing is religion and caste.

## **II. SUGGESTIONS**

1. Awareness and educating of the people play a major role in changing this mentality of people. Thus, the media plays a major role in it. Media has to increase the reach of a large number of positive news towards the public rather than covering only murder issues.
2. Strict laws are to be enacted such that people who involve in honour killing and who support and help in such activities such be punished equally without any mitigating factors' role.
3. Honour killing is not only defined as a homicide that occurs as a consequence of inter-caste marriage. In fact, the name honour killing is itself misleading. Name caste-based killing, which is a tool that creates differences and discrimination among people in this society, as honour is totally meaningless. And the definition of honour differs from person to person, and a prudent man thinks as honour should also be considered, which may include his reputation and his principles. Etc.
4. For murder and culpable homicide, the minimum sentence of punishment must be defined by law so that the strict implementation of the law can be assured because creating hesitation among people when they try to do a wrongful act through punishment is necessary as it becomes a necessary evil for this society for the welfare of the society. Killing family members out of deep-rooted discrimination based on caste, religion, etc., is highly violative of the Fundamental Rights enshrined under Articles 14, 15, and 21, that is right to equality, the right against discrimination and the right to life. So, a minimum of seven years of rigorous imprisonment has to be ensured.
5. Along with this, empowerment of the weaker section of society is also to be given importance. People who are very much backward in society without enough representation in society must be given recognition by way of reservations. But the existing reservation system must be restructured in such a way that the creamy layer of society is eliminated. This would provide equal developmental opportunities for people

from different backgrounds and develop their economic and societal status of people and would reduce the chances of committing such crimes.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Every day at least 15 women are killed in the name of honour killing. It is still a blackmark in Indian history that such crimes occur even today after seventy-five years of Independence. The rigid and deep-rooted framework of the caste system serves to be one of the important reasons for such violent crimes. The most reliable solution for keeping a full stop is educating the existing and future generations about equality and brotherhood. The 'we-feeling' among people must be established at a tender age so that its fruits would be much tastier.

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**IV. QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where are you from?
  - a. Rural area
  - b. Urban area
3. Gender
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Third gender
4. Honor killing is
  - a. It is carried out to protect the honor of the woman and the family
  - b. One that is carried out to maintain the norms and culture of the ethnic group
  - c. One that is carried out due to a social pressure
  - d. Other:
5. Does anyone have the right to take someone's life?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. May be if its legally needed
  - d. Other:
6. What is dignity and respect for a man?
  - a. His good deeds and thoughts
  - b. The value of his descendants.
  - c. The fear people have for him
  - d. The good faith people have in him
  - e. Other:
7. What to do to protect one's honor and dignity
  - a. Helping the poor.
  - b. Doing his duty properly

- c. Increasing one's strength.
  - d. Showing one's strength in front of people
  - e. With the help of political or religious or social or economic support / background
8. How is one's dignity degraded?
- a. One's own indecent activity.
  - b. By his dependents (family, friends, etc.)
  - c. Actions and activities of any group (religious or political or other) to which he belongs
  - d. One's living condition.
  - e. Other:
9. Honor killers kill for their \_\_\_\_
- a. Family
  - b. time
  - c. caste
  - d. legacy
  - e. Other:
10. The main reason for preventing honor killing is
- a. To maintain harmony without conflicts
  - b. Preserving traditional norms.
  - c. Reducing government burdens
  - d. Lowering people's self-esteem
  - e. Other:
11. Reasons for \_\_ % honor killings are meaningful.
- a. 100%
  - b. 75%
  - c. 50%
  - d. 25%
  - e. 0%

12. Where is the rate of honor killings highest?
- Among the people living in a good condition.
  - Among people living in a middle class family.
  - Among people facing various problems and discrimination socially.
  - Among people living below the poverty line
  - Other:
13. Immediate cause of honor killing,
- Damage to one's dignity and respect.
  - Caste issues.
  - Religious issues
  - Other differences
  - Loss of self-control
  - Other:
14. What should we encourage to prevent honor killings?
- Educational training
  - Awareness program
  - Strict law
  - Unity
  - Other:
15. Honor killings are only carried out by the dominant society.
- Yes
  - No
  - May be
16. Government has prevented honor killing through legal action
- Yes
  - No
  - May be
  - Yes but not enough

17. Does politics have any role in honor killings?

- a. Must be
- b. will be
- c. May be
- d. There won't be
- e. Not necessarily

18. Honor killings are duly punished

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May be

19. Comments\_\_\_\_\_

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