

Women's Safety: Society's Failure and the State's Responsibility

1- Introduction

Hook

General Statement

Thesis Statement: The domestic Violence, patriarchy, social stereotypes and unjustified restrictions caused women unsafe in Pakistan. The state need to realize its responsibility and to ensure significant initiatives.

2- Social Structures; Failed to Protect Women

2.1- Unsafe Domestic Atmosphere; Domestic Violence, patriarchy, neopatriarchy

- Case Study: 'A Blue Room' by Nafisa Rizvi

2.2- Hamper Fundamental Freedom; Low career opportunities, decision space, acceptance of violence

- Case study; 'Saving Face'

2.3- Social stereotypes; Subjugation, wrong religious practices, culture of 'Jirga'

- Case study; Qandeel Baloch.

2.4- Social Class and Variations of Insecurity; common insecurities,

- Case studies; 'My Feudal Lords', 'Dr.

raped in India', 'A Girl in River'

3- Deficiencies in Governmental Setups

3.1- Poor Judicial Structures; Low conviction rate, lack of transparency

• Case Study; 'Mukhtara Mai'

3.2- Fragile Implementation of Laws; Vague reporting and investigation, Article(311) of PPC

4- Responsibilities of State

4.1- Social Responsibility; Ensure education, equal career opportunities, implement religious teachings

4.2- Legal Responsibilities; Transparency in Judicial system, application of legislations, inclusion of female staff

5- Conclusion

Once a man stopped a women and asked that why she is not ^{frightened} threatening to walk outside at this hour of night. The lady replied, either Caliph died or you are the Caliph, because no one can dare to stop a women untill Caliph is alive. This was the time of Caliph Umar Farooq, and the man stopped her was actually the Caliph himself. The question is that why women is still insecure in 21st century, with leading advancements. The administration assures the security of its public and state's authority make people obliged to ensure the security of women. Islam has awarded full protection to women and the life of Caliphate is exemplary. Unfortunately, the hegemony of stereotypes and western culture make women a vulnerable group of society. The teachings of Islam and Prophet are long forgotten. The country which was created on name of 'Islam' is backsliding from true teaching of religion. However, in South Asia the virus of violence and insecurity of women is major issue. Even it is never acknowledged that some

costoms are actually degrading and discriminating half of population. The awareness of education and human rights contributed to some extent but women is still struggling. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure the protection by certain legislations and their implementations. The domestic violence, patriarchy, stereotypes, and unjustified restrictions caused women unsafe across the globe, the state must realize its responsibility and ensure significant initiatives to protect them.

The word 'home' is often associated with protection and security. The delimma is that women sometimes remain insecure at their homes. The culture of dominating women is very evident in south Asia. In Pakistan, a patriarchal society treated women as object and created to be suppressed. Women have no choice to choose life partner and then to discuss family planning. Many females face domestic violence under patriarchy. Nabisa Rizvi in her novel 'A Blue Room' portrayed a typical Pakistani

society. The violence towards women by their husbands and justifications from other females of house, which is neopatriarchy.

The combination of patriarchy and neopatriarchy is alarming in rural areas specifically.

The grievances touched height when females tried to killed by their family members.

The reasons can be to choose life partner, fight with in-laws, significantly it is due to dowry related issues. To protect women from such incidents, 'The ^{dowry and} Bridal Gift Act (1972)' is present. The state is not giving it much attention and in present years women are still facing dowry related murders and usually they go unreported. The institutions of state must consider them as crucial for social wellbeing of state.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Bill of Rights, Feminist movements and International Laws. All such ideas are securing right and prosperity but 'whose'? The women which is 51% of the population of Pakistan and no law either national or international can protect

her from being victim. Sharmin Obaid in her documentaries showed the cruelty and unsafe environment for women. In 'Face Saving', she showcased how a woman being a victim of acid attack is struggling for justice. The society failed when treat those victims as accusers or criminals. The one female was alone struggling and families usually reject them to protect. In above mentioned documentary, a character which was acid victim go back to her abusive husband because she cannot pay the expenses of her childrens. This reminds the acceptance of violence in society. She described that female members of her in-laws threw 'diesel' on her. The society where females are victim and females are also partners in crime with males, such societies lack social peace. The restriction to choose something can lead to violence and rejection to bow down as well. So, the society failed to protect half of its population.

'There is no honour in honour killing', once mentioned by Former PM

Nawaz. The murder of Qandeel Baloch diverted the attention of society. However, it is not new, such practices are present in traditional culture of South Asia. The burning of widow with her husband in Hinduism and marrying women with 'Quran' in south punjab and sindh. These practices are socially constructed just like 'gender', which is too socially constructed. Such practices are not welcoming in present time of media and technology and cause national disrespect. Western ideals are leading the world in protecting women and muslims in Pakistan are forgetting basic teachings of Islam. Islam granted protection and respect to all human beings and Prophet (PBUH) guided with his sunnah to protect and love females. He (PBUH) did not even allowed to kill women in wars. After 1400 years, in Pakistan a couple got murdered by decision of 'Jirga', so society is following neither Islam nor Western human rights. The society must protect its citizens and ensure the rule

of justice.

Is the failure of society to protect women is related to social class? Firstly, a woman in upper class is usually treated as possession and she faced same insecurity in society. 'I was merely a possession for him', noted by Tehmina Durrani in her 'My Feudal Lords'. She also mentioned domestic violence and abusive behavior of her husband. Secondly, a girl with freedom to get education and earn her living also witness same ~~vijae~~ ^{same} social structure. The rape of female doctor in India in her hospital. She worked for long hours without rest and devoted herself to protect many lives. But society failed to protect her and she got killed. Thirdly, a girl who married by her choice ~~g~~ became victim of her uncle's and father's anger. A documentary by Sharmin Obaid, 'A Girl in River' highlighted the poor class killing daughter for 'honour'. She survived the attempt

to kill her, the elder of town forced her to forgive her father and uncle. The social pressure restricted her justice and instead of deterrence it remained as custom. So, the unsafe atmosphere for women can not be altered by any social class. The economic and ^{prestige} career security are unable to guarantee protection to women, the societal structures need to be changed in order to ensure protection.

The alarming situation of women safety is showcasing deficiencies of state's procedures, legislations and justice system. The state must realize its responsibility and ensure significant initiatives to protect them. The loopholes in judicial system of Pakistan can not prevent 'Jirga systems', even after banning them. One such jirga also did not face its punishment when they gave order to rape 'Mukhtara Mai'. Mai waited for her justice but remained victim of low conviction rate.

Many claimed that insecurity is because of 'dressing' of women. The question is

if dressing is problem than why a 6 year old 'Zainab' got raped. The freehand to criminals is state's failure to protect women in any age. There is no deterrence and criminals are freed. The female just judges were viewed as hope however, when system is corrupted no one can assure security of life or dignity of citizens. Many cases go unreported because of 'honour' in society. The family and society silenced them. Meantime, if luckily any women get chance to report her case and prove her innocence. These females loss by elite abusers or by difficult, ambiguous and often vague judicial procedures. There is no transparency in judicial system of Pakistan.

There are certain legislations approved by government to protect women. In every era since independence they passed legislations. Whereas, these laws are only bookish and rarely proved as practical. The reporting of cases for women abusers are viewed as women

herself is criminal. The government passed a law which makes state as guardian of victim of honour killing. The Article (311) of PPC is ideal in such patriarchal atmosphere. The guardians forgive the criminal because the family is usually involved in such cases. The state declared such events as 'farad bil Arz'. The dilemma is usually while reporting police officer did not add those articles of PPC which make those cases as 'farad bil Arz'. So, even after struggle of legislative processes, the state declined in governing.

The state can start from awareness related to such issues. There must be some procedures and policies to interact with local community and to open such topics. The opposite narratives to target rigid social stereotypes are crucial. The religious leaders can contribute in such situation. They must ensure true teachings and interpretation of 'Quran' and 'Sunnah'. The religious leaders declare dowry

any kind of harassment towards women, out of the bounds of Islam. They must also guide about the necessity of education in Islam. Prophet PBUH once said, the one who brought up his three daughters, took care of them, give them education, he will be with me in Jannah. The education of both gender is state's responsibility. An educated women is more confident, know laws, aware and not as easy task for abuser. Also, an educated male treats women with respect and care as compared to illiterate members. Therefore, engaging religious leaders, ensuring education and spreading awareness helped state to fulfill its responsibility.

Apart from some social steps, state need to ensure identifying deficiencies and loopholes in state's apparatuses. There is need to revive the judicial procedures related to females. A strengthened judiciary, which is transparent in procedures and follows the book of law. It increases the

conviction rate and create deterrence. Deterrence remained effective in curbing crime. State can also make a procedure to enhance implementation of laws already passed. The victim must be guided about her rights and legal procedures. The actual application of laws are vital to save the insecure female community. State's responsibilities are numerous but degradation of half of its population will increase vulnerabilities. Many critics argued about female staff in difficult professions like police. The female police officer is easy to be approached for female victims. A new initiative by chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, a police station specially for female victims. It is affecting, only if not politicized. The government must improve judicial system, application of laws and inclusion of female staff can mitigate the pain of ignored and insecure portion of society. Women safety is crucial for strong base of social community and wellbeing of state. In south Asia,

women remained an insecure group and the society failed to protect them. The customs or practices like acid throwing, honour killing, trafficking and domestic violence. The manipulation and subjugation of women is visible in every class of society. The virus of patriarchy starts from domestic level but trapped whole society. This is the need of the hour, the state must realize its responsibility. The society can not demand prosperity by sidelining half of its population. The society makes administration and government so, loopholes and biasness towards gender showcased at administrative levels as well. It is state's responsibility to engage religious leaders, ensure education and spread awareness to protect females in society. Also, the government must improve judicial system, application of laws and inclusion of female staff can help mitigating the pain of vulnerable community. Hence, the state must treat all gender equally to truly fulfill its responsibility.