

Question no. 06

Elaborate different forms of gender based violence. Also, elaborate the effectiveness of existing laws and policies in addressing gender-based violence in Pakistan.

Gender Based Violence

1 Introduction:

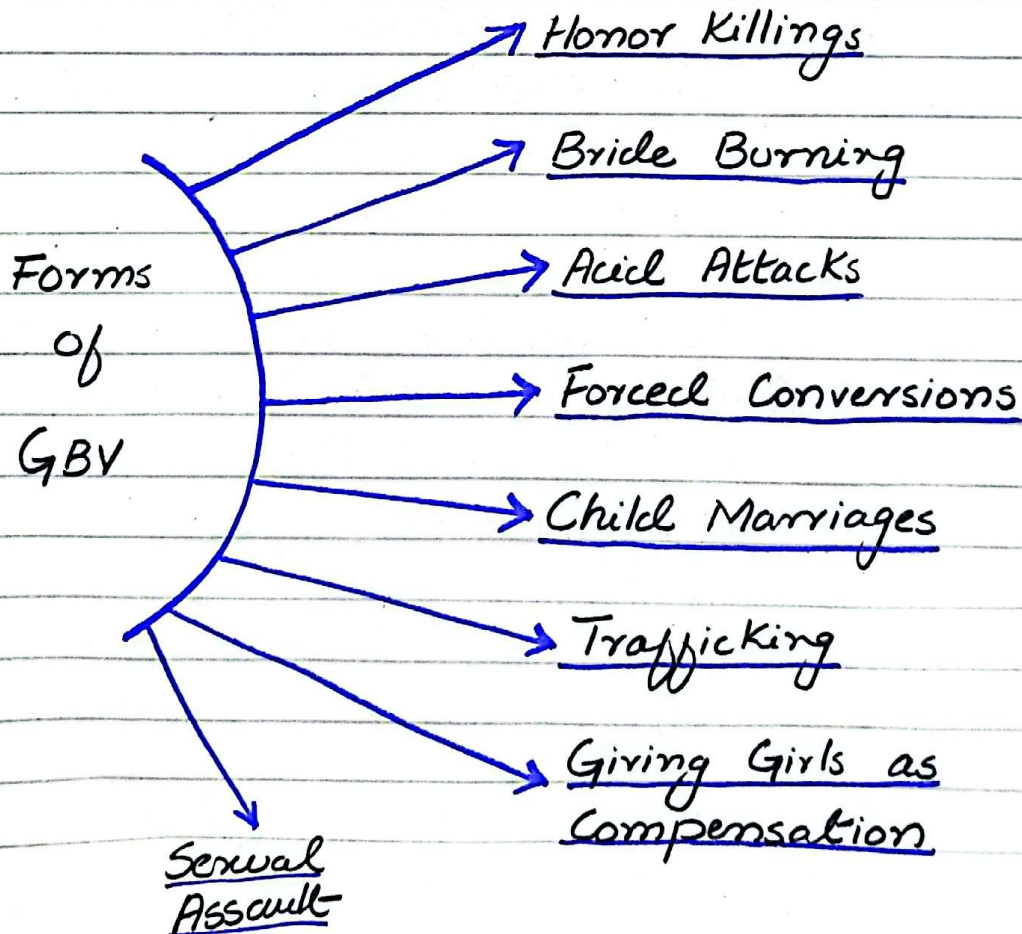
Gender based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue that transcends borders, cultures, and socio-economic strata, manifesting in various forms such as physical, emotional, and economic abuse. It stems from deep root gender inequalities, patriarchal norms, and societal structures. In Pakistan, gender based violence remains a critical issue. Despite the presence of legal framework, their implementation is hindered due to lack of accountability, slow judicial processes, and corruption.

2 Definition:

“ Any use of force, either physical or psychological, against women or another person, causing death, physical harm, mental stress or development problem. ”

- Human Right Watch

3 Forms of Gender Based Violence:



(i)

Honor Killings

Killing of any person in the name of family honor is known as honor killing. It is a widespread crime in Pakistan concentrated in areas of South Punjab, Northern Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is called 'Swarra' in KP, 'Karo Kari' in Sindh, and 'Kalla Kalli' in Punjab. According to a report, almost 176 people, mostly, women were killed in the name of honor in Sindh in 2023.

(ii)

Bride Burning

Bride burning or stove burning is often committed in Pakistan. It is fueled by the demand for dowry. If the bride's family is unable to provide demanded dowry, husband's family often try to burn her with flammable liquids.

(iii)

Acid Attacks

Acid attacks are often result of rejection by proposal or demand for divorce. It is fueled by male-ego and dominance. It is widespread issue in Pakistan. In 2010, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy made a documentary named 'Saving Face' to highlight this persistent issue in Pakistan.

(iv)

Forced Conversions

Forced conversion is another major issue in Pakistan. It is more common in Sindh province. Young girls from minority community are often abducted and forced to convert their religion. It is often fueled by desire to marry them on religious purpose.

(v)

Child Marriages

Many girls in Pakistan are married before the legal age for marriage, which is 18 years. It is a common issue in Pakistan and often defended by religious clerics.

(vi)

Trafficking

Trafficking includes forced migration or slavery, often for the purpose of prostitution. According to a report, annually 20,000 people are trafficked in Pakistan and 80 percent of them are women.

(vii)

Giving Girls as Compensation

It is a common tribal practice in Pakistan. Aggressor's family give a girl from their family as compensation to aggrieved. It is called 'tore' in KP, 'Song Chatti' in Sindh, and 'Jrjaee' in Balochistan.

(viii)

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault include rape, groping, unethical touch or any non-consensual advance. It is a persistent issue in Pakistan. In between 1999 and 2023, 6623 rape cases were reported in Pakistan. It means one woman was raped every 45 minutes.

4 Existing Laws in Pakistan

Regarding Gender-Based Violence:

i) The Protection of Women against Harassment at the Workplace Act (2011)

ii) The Acid Control and Prevention Bill (2011)

iii) The Criminal Law (3rd Amendment)

iv) Prevention of Anti-Woman Practices Act (2010)

v) Women in Distress and Detention Fund (2011)

5 Critical Evaluation:

There are various laws and policies in Pakistan to prevent the gender-based violence. However, the core issue is the implementation of these laws. Due to judicial loopholes and ineffective crime proceeding system, these laws remain useless.

For instance, the case of Mukhtara Mai 2002 took over nine years to complete its judicial proceedings. Moreover, there numerous incidents of police taking bribe from the Mai's family (to release her brother Shakoor) were reported. Even journalists reported that, police treated the perpetrator as their guest. This shows ineffectiveness of Pakistan's law enforcing system.

6 Conclusion:

There are various forms of gender-based violence persists in Pakistan. They are rooted in patriarchal culture and ineffective law enforcing system of Pakistan. To mitigate these crimes, awareness, women empowerment and strict enforcement are necessary.