

SECTION-I

Question 2: Suggest measures to control gender-based crimes in Pakistan?

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Introduction:

Gender-based crimes (GBCs) in Pakistan include domestic violence, honor killings, rape, sexual harassment and cyber abuse.

These crimes stem from patriarchal norms, weak law enforcement and social silence. According to the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO, 2024), Pakistan reported over 32,000 cases of gender based violence in 2024, indicating that the problem is structural rather than incidental. Effective control therefore requires legal, institutional, social and economic reforms.

Legal and Judicial Reforms:

Pakistan has enacted laws such as the Anti-Honor Killing Laws (2016) and the Protection Against

Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010). However, enforcement remains weak. SSDO (2024) reports that conviction rates for rape and honor killing cases are below 1%. The government should establish special fast-track gender courts in every district, ensure witness protection, and strengthen forensic evidence collection. Strong punishment certainly, rather than harsher law alone, deters crime.

Police Reform and Victim Support :

Police behavior discourages reporting. According to HRCP (2023), many victims withdraw cases due to intimidation and humiliation.

Expanding Women Protection Centers, already functioning in Punjab can improve access to legal aid, medical care and shelter. Training police officers in gender-sensitive investigation and increasing female police staff will increase trust and reporting.

Education and Social Norm Change :

Gender-based crimes are sustained by harmful cultural beliefs. Pakistan's female literacy rate remains around **51%**, compared to **75%** for males (Pakistan Economic Survey **2023-24**). Gender equality concepts should be included in school curricula, media campaigns and mosque sermons. As Simone de Beauvoir stated, "oppression is sustained by social conditioning, not biology."

Economic Empowerment of Women :

Economic dependence increases women's vulnerability. The World Bank (**2024**) reports that female labor force participation in Pakistan is only **23%**, among the lowest globally. Providing women with vocational training, microfinance, inheritance rights, and employment opportunities reduces dependence and enables them to escape abusive environments.

Community and Religious Engagement:

Honor crimes are often justified through culture. Religious scholars and community elders must publicly condemn such practices. The Council of Islamic Ideology has clarified that honor killing has no Islamic basis. As Justice Javed Iqbal noted, "honor killing is murder, nothing else."

Conclusion:

Gender-based crimes in Pakistan can only be controlled through a coordinated strategy combining legal enforcement, police reform, education, women's economic and community engagement. Without addressing both institutional weaknesses and patriarchal norms, isolated reforms will fail to produce lasting change. As Nelson Mandela aptly observed, "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression."