

Day: Thursday

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NOA Test Series

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Subject: English Essay.

Question : 01

Can legislation alone end Honour Killings in Pakistan?

Outline:

01 Introduction

Thesis Statement: Although legislation marks an essential step, it cannot by itself end honour killings in Pakistan, as the phenomenon is driven by entrenched tribal traditions, caste expectations, patriarchal power structures and parallel justice systems that continue to override the authority of formal law.

02. Historical and Legal context.

03. Why legislation matters?

a. The role of strong legal frameworks in deterrence

b. Case study 2014: The jirga ordered dual murder in Abbottabad.

c. Importance of consistent enforcement and predictable sentencing.

04. Structural barriers to implementations.

a. Weak law enforcement capacity.

b. Abuse of legal loopholes.

c. Social pressure against reporting.

d. Case Study 2025: Recent Balochistan honour killing.

05. Cultural Roots of honour Killing.

a. Role of patriarchal honour codes in everyday life.

b. Intersections of caste, feudal loyalties and religious misinterpretations.

c. Narration of typical rural scenario where an honour killing unfolds.

d. Honour tied to female chastity and male control.

e. Self-choice marriages framed as dishonourable.

06. Beyond legislation: What actually works.

a. Community-led Awareness programmes

b- Women's economic empowerment.

c- Gender Sensitive education.

07. Religious Counter Narratives.

a- Case-Study: KPK Friday Sermon campaign- (2018-2020)

b- Technology, social media and youth activism.

08. Conclusion.

The Essay.

There's this bittersweet paradox woven into Pakistan's social fabric; the nation has powerful stories of resilience, empowerment, and progressive reform - yet honour killings still shadow its moral landscape. It's like the country is running a national project roadmap that is visionary on paper but blocked by legacy systems that nobody quite knows how to decommission. Honour killings, brutal as they are, survive because they are embedded in old codes of masculinity and control, passed down like a toxic family heirloom.

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Although legislation marks an essential step, it cannot by itself end honour killings in Pakistan, as the phenomenon is driven by entrenched tribal traditions, caste expectations, and parallel justice system that continue to override the authority of formal law.

To understand why honour killings persist, we need to go a bit retro - back into the cultural codebase that predates modern Pakistani law. In tribal and feudal societies across South Asia and the Middle East, concepts of honour have long been tied to women's choices, mobility, and sexuality. Legally, Pakistan has tried for decades to debug this system. The watershed moment came in 1990 with the introduction of the Qisas and Diyat laws, which allowed families of murder victims to forgive the killers, often in exchange for compensation. Unfortunately, these laws had a massive loophole: since honour killings were frequently committed

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by family members themselves, forgiveness was issued in-house.

In 2016, Pakistan passed a significant anti-honour killing law after the murder of social media star Gandeel Baloch, attempted to (c/o) correct these loopholes by making honour killings non-compoundable, enforcing mandatory 25 year sentences and restricting the use of forgiveness.

When legislation is strong, it creates a powerful baseline. It's like setting clear policies: no matter how people feel about them, robust laws establish deterrence, by making punishment predictable, clarity by defining honour killings as premeditated murder rather than culturally excusable acts; and leverage by enabling police and courts to intervene even without family cooperation.

In recent years, some honour killing cases seen successful convictions precisely because judges were obligated to act regardless of social pressure. In 2014, a local jirga

ordered the killing of two teenagers for allegedly filming themselves together. Police, empowered by mandatory sentencing laws and media attention, pursued the perpetrators even without family cooperation. Several arrests were made, showing that law can override social customs when applied decisively.

Even with airtight laws, implementation often fails because institutions are under-resourced, communities resist state authority, and parallel justice systems still operate.

The Farzana Parveen Case (2014) is a chilling example. She was stoned to death by her own family outside the Lahore high Court. Policemen were nearby, yet they hesitated. Her killer eventually benefited from (fr) forgiveness laws at the time. This gap between law and enforcement still haunts Pakistan's Justice landscape.

And then, just recently, Pakistan was shaken by one of the most horrifying

honour killings in years. In mid-2025, a video went viral from an area near Quetta showing the execution of a couple, Bano Satakzi and Ehsanullah Samalani. They were reportedly accused of "Karakari" after allegedly marrying or attempting to marry against their families' wishes. A tribal jirga condemned them, and the video showed the woman clutching a Qura'n moments before being shot.

This tragedy offers a laser-sharp illustration of the problem legislation existed, but the cultural and tribal power structure completely bypassed it until public pressure (intervene) intervened. If law was alone enough, Bano and Ehsanullah would still be alive.

To understand why the law struggles, we need to explore the cultural terrain - this is where honour as an ideology lives and breathes. Patriarchal honour codes run

deep, especially in rural areas. Women's movement, choices and relationships become reputational risks monitored by family members and local gossip networks.

In many regions, especially rural Punjab, interior Sindh and parts of Balochistan, caste identity is tied to ideas of purity and prestige. Families see women as keepers of lineage, so marriages outside the caste are framed as threats to family status. When caste, feudal power and religious misinterpretation work together, they create a high-pressure environment. Women's autonomy, especially in marriages or relationships, becomes a direct threat to caste, pride, feudal controls and family's supposed religious morality.

Descriptions of (lōd) day-to-day life in rural areas reveal how these codes subtly shape behaviour. A woman seen talking to a man outside her family circle becomes an immediate target

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of gossip. A young couple wanting to marry for love is considered rebellious.

Men grow up hearing that protecting honour is a sacred duty.

The 2025 Balochistan case (reflected) reflects exactly this; a community consensus that the couple's choices were reputational threat. A jirga used cultural authority to override the state, reinforcing how deeply honour ideology is embedded in local power structures.

Ending honour killings requires intervention- beyond the legal domain, changes in social, educational, and economic structures.

Think of it like a national change-management program with cross-functional stakeholders.

Local influencers - teachers, religious leaders, journalists - can challenge honour-based norms from within the culture. Look at the Swat Valley community-led programmes where teachers and activists used theatre,

poetry, and school activities to challenge honour norms. Local homicides rates related to honour crimes dropped measurably between 2017 and 2021.

When women contributes financially, the balance of power shifts. Families gradually start seeing daughters as assests, not liabilities. Economic security also allows women to escape abusive enviornments. In Punjab, NGO's providing women with sewing machines, microloans, and digital training saw a 30-40% reduction in reported domestic violence cases.

So much honor-based violence is committed under the false assumption that religious sanctions it. This where the religious scholars play a huge role. In several districts of KPK, religious scholars led a campaign- clarifying that honour killing have zero Islamic legitimacy. Some regions have already seen success where imams deliver sermons debunking cultural myths that have masquered

as religious (cultural^x (m)) obligations.

If there is one group rewriting the script, it's Pakistani youth. Gen Z creators, activists and students are using Tiktok, Instagram, and Youtube to normalize conversations around women's rights, personal autonomy, and toxic honour culture. The Balochistan case only became a national priority because young people shared, reposted and refused to let the story die. Digital activism is now a strategic driver for accountability, a kind of social audit that pushes the state to act.

Hence, legislation is vital - the foundation, the core infrastructure. But the heart of the matter is cultural. Legislation is crucial, but it cannot operate in isolation. A Pakistan free from the honour killings is not just a compliance milestone - It's a love story waiting to be lived. Laws provide the skeleton - but culture, institutions, education and community collaboration breathe life into that structure.
