

Addressing ‘Honour Killings’ in India: Role of Media, social platforms, and film in depicting cases of honour killings in India

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Abstract

In our country, honour killings have a long history. During the country's split, countless women were forcibly murdered in order to uphold the honour. Honour crimes are against the Indian Constitution's Articles 14, 15, 19, 21, and 39. Because formal governance has not reached rural areas, there has been an increase in the number of honour killings. As a result, this practice has persisted, and in today's world, it is not only limited to rural areas but is also widespread in major cities like Delhi. A type of violence against women that has its roots in patriarchal ideas of family and communal honour is the practise of "honour killings". In India, choosing to wed outside of one's caste or religion or engaging in a love engagement that isn't acceptable by one's family are common causes of honour killings.

In India there is no expressly mentioned provision for freedom of press, however this approach has been developed by the Supreme Court and has associated the same with Free Speech and Expression.

Bollywood, the common name for Indian cinema, has the power to put a stop to the horrifying crime known as the "honour killing."Without a question, the Indian media has made efforts to educate the public on a number of occasions through various campaigns, but we cannot ignore

the fact that recently, the media has displayed insensitivity when reporting on honour killing incidents in India. The freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed by Art 19 of the Indian Constitution, but that does not give the media or the film industry carte blanche to act however they like. The media portrays examples of honour killing in such a dramatic way that it may draw viewers and lead them to believe that this is a viable option for preserving one's dignity. This article focuses on the role of the media, other social platforms, Indian cinemas and the ability it has to influence public opinion and can be a key factor in putting a stop to honour killings in India. The media may contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society for women by criticizing how honour killings cases are portrayed in the media and by exploring the roots of this violence.

Keywords - Honour Killings, media, human rights, fundamental rights, Constitution, films

Introduction-

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, the society has been catering all the people belonging to different religion, castes, language, cultures with several ups and downs. The ‘ups’ that is the practices which promotes harmony and fraternity as mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution have always been highlighted by our people, media and the State. However, in highlighting the good features of the society the bad or wrongs are concealed either in the name of tranquility or in the name of customs or practices. This concealment gives birth to several evil practices like Sati, Honour Killing and so others, also somewhere promotes the wrong doers. Therefore, in such cases the role of media and the fundamental rights becomes very substantive to uphold the interest of society.

The United Nations estimates that more than 5,000 women and girls are murdered worldwide each year in the name of honour, though that number is likely higher. According to Human Rights Watch, 15 to 20 honour killings are carried out annually in Jordan, with many cases going

unreported. And since Layan's video went viral, many young Jordanians have taken to social media to loudly question how much longer this deadly practice will go on. There is no doubt the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated all forms of gender-based violence throughout the world — a growing reality the UN has referred to as a “shadow pandemic.” Gender-based violence in Jordan has increased by 33 percent since lockdown, with at least 17 reported cases of domestic murders in 2020. [1] So-called honour crimes are predominantly committed by men who believe that a woman relative has done something to shame them. Many so-called honour crimes are a result of perceived sexual indecency on the part of the woman. Indecency can range from having an affair, spending time alone with a man who isn't a relative or spouse, to simply posting on social media. Some men believe the only way to restore their so-called honour is by completely cleansing the shame from their family.

July 15 in 2016, Qandeel Baloch, a Pakistani social-media star, was strangled to death by her brother for “dishonoring” the family name by being outspoken about female sexuality. So-called honour killings are widespread in Pakistan, where more than 1,000 women were killed by relatives in 2015.

Evil Practice of Honour Killing-

The multi-cultural, multi-customary practices also gave birth to several inhumane practices which became so imbibed in the society that a large portion of population started considering it a matter of pride. For instance, earlier the practice of Sati was considered pious and a matter of pride, but no one thought about the sufferings the woman has to go through. However, with constant efforts of leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy the practice was declared a punishable offence. Though this practice was associated with religion, custom but there also exist an evil practice of Honour Killing which is not directly related to one religion but is dependent merely

on self-claimed prestige, pride and social image in the society. That is the reason since beginning it is called as “KILLING. Honour Killing thus can be termed as killing of a human being by a human being for protecting the honour of the offender or offender’s community. This presumed ‘honour’ may be to protect the self-claimed image in society which may sometimes be based on caste of one party/community is different to that of the other, sometimes the religion of one party/community is different to that of that other, sometimes even economic status of one family/community becomes an issue with that of other, even in some cases if all things are equal then also the personal satisfaction of one community becomes the issue and all these either collectively or individually becomes a cause of committing this offence of Honour Killing in the name of saving pride and prestige.

Fundamental Rights and Honour Killing

Every human has been given some rights merely because he has taken birth as a human. Indian Constitution has provided for several fundamental rights under Part III, for Citizens and also some basic rights for non-citizen. In reference to Honour Killing, Freedom of speech and expression is the basic right which is enshrined under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution have to be detailed. Freedom of Speech and Expression shall not be limited to fundamental rights but is also conferred and assured under various conventions and declarations like Universal Declaration on Human Rights declares free speech under Article 19 and state that ‘everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’ Also, ICCPR [2] ensures under **Article 19 that-**

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

The term free speech cannot be stretched to limit its application over the ideas of the individuals. Thus, there are possibilities that a person or certain group of persons may not agree with the opinion of majority population. This disagreement shall also form part of some concrete right and shall be guaranteed to that group or persons. This opinion can be termed as the dissent, and therefore every citizen of India has the right to dissent as enshrined under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. In this reference a majority may not agree to the choice of minority even in terms of right to choose a partner and right to live with liberty.

India has a democratic form of governance wherein every citizen has a right to participate in the Governance either directly or indirectly. Similarly, citizens raising voice against the pre-determined notions of society which may be against one's rights merely on the ground of their choice and self-claimed custom, tradition is also an aspect of right, and therefore such opinions are for the welfare of the people as India is also known for its welfare character of state. This right is the freedom of speech and expression. In respect of Honour Killing Article 19(1)(a) freedom of speech and expression can be understood in two aspects in one aspect where

the holder of right wants to express his or her fundamental right to choice and expression by expressing the choice of partner. However, this right is violated by the people following certain pre-conceived notions that such right to choose a life partner is no right and the person has to marry or choose the life partner with their choice. The person is denied such right, even though it is believed that fundamental rights are exercised against the State but it is also the duty of the state to protect the rights that is the reason right to choice and expression and right to live with dignity is claimable against a community also. These, days even opening up about one's sexual orientation becomes a matter of honour, if some person is a gay or a lesbian or a bisexual or so related person and if he or she shares this with anyone or if it is spread in society it becomes a matter of dis-repute to that family and the person with such orientation is killed by his or her family members. Thus, if the person denies to agree with the choice of majority it becomes a trouble for the holder of right. This expression of refusal from majority's opinion is called the right to dissent.

The opinions or expressions so made may not be accepted by society at large but this doesn't render the right of the individual null and waived. Justice Deepak Gupta [3] in an event organized by the Supreme Court Bar Association vehemently said that "though the rule of majority is the integral part of democracy, majoritarianism is an antithesis of democracy." Justice Gupta discussed about the aspect of general dissent and its importance in democracy specifically emphasizing on the Indian structure of democracy. Therefore, dissents or dissenting opinions must be encouraged through debates, discussion so as to strive for better ways to run the Country. Justice Gupta also said without challenging the old norms and rules novation in the thoughts and ideas will not surface and thus the law will not develop. The theorem of Rosco Pound of social engineering will fail. We can relate it with the opinions against the people committing offence in the name of Honour.

Other aspect of free speech shall be related to the Freedom of Press which is discussed in the next head.

Similarly, Article 21 of the Constitution has enshrined in it right to live with dignity and liberty. In several cases like *Kharak Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh* [4] and *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* [5] the Supreme Court has held that right to life merely doesn't mean basic animal existence rather it means the right to live with dignity. The Supreme Court also held in cases like *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* that right to die with dignity is also a fundamental right within the ambit of Article 21.

In reference to honour killing both rights are violated, that is to say, when the woman is denied the right to choose life partner which was also held to be a right in the case of *Shakti Vahini v. Union of India* [6] it violates her right to free expression and choice, when she is denied to express her choice it's a violation of free speech and expression. When committing the offence of Honour Killing (murder) the woman is killed it violates her right to life and when her body is disposed of in disrespectful manner it is violation of right to die with dignity.

Thus, this heinous act of killing in the name of honour also violates Article 14 of Indian Constitution where it treats woman in similar circumstances but asking for their rights against the majority opinion.

Role of Media addressing Honour Killings in India

Justice Patanjli Shastri in the case of *Romesh Thapper v. State of Madras*[7] held that "Freedom of speech and that of the press is the foundation of organizations, for without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the process of popular Government, is possible." This we can relate to the freedom of choice of one group of people that is right to marry with one's own choice. However, these opinions of the Judges stand good

even today. If a person has a right to live his or her life with dignity as under Article 21, and right to choose his or her partner as under Article 19(1)(a) and 21 of the Constitution of India, the media also has role to protect these rights within its ambit by making people aware of these rights. There are several other modes to spread awareness and motivate the public for protection of their rights but one of the most important and influencing mode is the Media.

Our media has played a vital role several times in very important issues which catered the society's welfare. On the other hand, sometimes, it has led to several consequences which weren't acceptable. The media helped the State in breaking the mysteries of cases like Jessica Lal's murder case, there are also several instances which displays the media moving beyond its investigating approach has declared even innocent people as the culprits, and then later those people were acquitted by the court but society treated them culprits even after that. The media has played negative roles like in the case of Mumbai Terror attacks it was due to the over enthusiastic and TRP grabbing approach of media the terrorists were able to know exact location of our soldiers and special forces. This aspect is only limited to the news media similar role is played by social media and by Cinemas by making movies which aren't based on actual facts but are portrayed to be based on facts. Thus, it is very important for the media to adopt a balanced approach specially in terms of Indian society because Indian population is majorly based on the media and they also become aware about several things through media.

Even if the heinous act of Killing in the name of Honour, is punishable as Murder in the Indian Penal Code, 1860 but still it has been in practice in several regions of India and the World. Therefore, it is necessary to make more and more people aware about its heinousness, about its punishment, and most importantly telling people about the wrong notions they carry and to make them believe in the social, cultural, religious unity. The 'Fraternity' as enshrined in the essential principles of Constitution and especially as in the Preamble shall be upheld. This awareness can be spread not by one person or institution but through collective participation of all like

individuals, government, public, media including social media, mass media, cinemas etc. It is very necessary for the media to spread awareness about Honor Killing, and making the mass population living especially in Rural areas, though the Urban areas have also noticed this issue in several places.

Honor Killing is a social evil which in its larger approach includes violation of several basic rights including right to life, speech, and others. Therefore, Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, in reference to Honour Killing and Role of Media can be taken in two contexts as highlighted above. One is the aspect of Right of Individual to Choose Life partner and live a life with dignity, the other aspect is Role of Media under its freedom of press. If media doesn't play its role it's also an indirect violation of fundamental right of information.

Initiatives taken by media in curbing the Honour Killings in India

In India, honour killings must be put an end thanks in large part to the media. The media can contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society in which honour killings are no longer permitted by increasing public knowledge of the problem, challenging damaging cultural practises, and encouraging tolerance and understanding.

Following are some instances where media coverage helped put an end to honour killings in India:

- The BBC Hindi covered honour killings extensively in 2016. The reports brought attention to the problem and disproved common misconceptions about it. The stories were attributed for bringing attention to the problem and causing an overall decline in the incidence of honour killings in India.
- The Times of India launched a campaign in 2017 titled "Stop Honour Killings." The campaign demanded an end to the practise and contained testimonies of individuals who had

been affected by honour killings. The effort was successful in bringing attention to the problem and in pressuring the administration to take action.

- NDTV aired a documentary in 2018 titled "Honour Killings: The Hidden Truth." In the documentary, the topic of honour killings in India was discussed, along with the toll the practise takes on human life. The documentary received plaudits for its delicate and insightful treatment of the subject.

These are just a few instances of how the media has been employed in India to put an end to honour killings. The media has a significant impact on this issue, thus it is crucial that they keep calling attention to it, challenging damaging cultural practises, and fostering tolerance and understanding.

Social Media platfroms and Honour killngs in India -

Social Media has been transformed as one of the most influencing and rapidly spreading media of all. The platforms like Facebook, Instagram and others run several pages where they spread awareness about several social issues in some cases even these platforms have held themselves as a news spreader or distributor. The individuals share the posts of these pages which leads to mass circulation in several such areas where the ordinary media may not have any approach or ways to reach. This is possible because generally known people are connected in any social media platform and which makes it easier to circulate the news not only in one area or street but even in small homes. Therefore, if social media is used for spreading awareness about the evil practise of Honour Killing. These media platforms can upgrade people to a modern thoughtful surroundings which will later turn these practices as sinful and not a matter of pride.

Even, the cinemas and daily shows have been continuously putting efforts for spreading awareness about issues like this, for instance in India a daily show displayed various practices. Sphere origins show '*Balika Vadhu* on Colors' has surely been one path breaking daily focusing

on many social issues and the latest one on which the makers will focus now is honour killing. The tone of the media while it reports honour killings should be of condemnation of this practice. At the same time they should steer clear of stereotypes. The most common stereotype that the English media adheres to while describing such killings is that they are a common rural phenomenon. They make lay audiences believe that honour killings can take place only in rural and backward settings. This creates a gross misperception about the rural population among urban dwellers.

The killings of Nirupama Pathak, a young Indian journalist and Nitish Katara, a young business executive from Delhi took place in urban cities. However, the English media has hammered us with too many stories on honour killings in Haryana and the Khap Panchayats that they have come to represent the entire scenario of honour killings in India. It would be incorrect to presume that such killings take place only in the rural heartland of the country where backwardness and casteism is expected to prevail. The media must also highlight cases of educated, urban, middle class families where such incidences have happened. Sadly though, the media's story of honour killings end up being incomplete and lop sided.[8]

Also, according to John Rawls, the most important quality of human being is not their sentience, but rather their rationality, that is, their ability to make choice. Human beings have the ability to decide the goals they desire to pursue in their lives. Therefore, this choice of human to choose a partner for itself and right to live and die with dignity it is based on rationality.

Role of Indian Films in addressing the issue of Honour killings in India

Honour killings, commonly referred to as "honour killings," are violent crimes performed against people, usually women, who are thought to have degraded their families' or communities' reputations. Close family members frequently commit these crimes in an effort to redeem their clan in the eyes of society.

Honour killings, while a tragic reality in some communities, should not be mistaken for a phenomenon unique to any one nation or culture. They happen all across the world, especially in South Asia, the Middle East, and some nations in Africa.

Bollywood, the popular name for Indian film, has contributed significantly to societal challenges and public impression shaping. Even if a few Indian films have featured honour killings, it is important to understand that Bollywood as a whole does not condone or support such violent crimes. Indian cinema, on the other hand, has typically taken a progressive stance in addressing social issues and promoting change.

Honour killings have been the subject of some well-known Bollywood films, which have shined light on the social stigmas and patriarchal attitudes that support such violence.

The movie "Astitva" (2000), which examines the effects of a woman's extramarital affair and the ensuing family problems, is one such example.

"Gulaal" (2009), which explores a range of social and political concerns in India, including honour killings, is another important movie. These films help people become more aware of the issue, but they do not speak for the entire Indian film industry.

It is important to distinguish between how honour killings are portrayed in Indian cinema and how common they are in real life. Like all other film industries, Bollywood reflects the society to which it belongs. Although it has the ability to sway public opinion, it cannot be held completely accountable for the occurrence or continuation of honour killings. Honour killings in India have gained more notoriety and censure in recent years, both within the entertainment industry and society at large.

There are initiatives underway to increase understanding, confront outdated perspectives, and support those who have experienced honor-based violence.

Overall, even though Indian cinema has occasionally tackled the problem of honour killings, it would be incorrect to blame Bollywood alone for the issue. Combating honour killings involves a comprehensive strategy that includes education, awareness, legislative reforms, and community change. Honour killings are a complicated social issue that have their roots in cultural beliefs.

Movies certainly leaves positive impact if movies are properly portrayed, it has apt social context and if it is creating awareness and giving something of good value to the people. Like in India several movies are based on crime, violence, social evil practices etc. Certainly these films created awareness among the people.

When we are discussing the crime of Honour killing then it is pertinent to note that, the movies which are showcased in India which were based on Honour killing were having following potential impact such as :

1. Education and Awareness: Films on honour killings might increase public awareness of this social issue. They can provide insight into the seriousness of the issue, the root causes, and the effects on people and communities. These films can help to inform the audience and start discussions about honor-based violence by bringing the problem to the fore.
2. Social Criticism: Films about honour killing frequently offer a social critique by questioning archaic customs and patriarchal standards. They might draw attention to the unfairness and cruelty involved in such crimes, provoking viewers to doubt and reevaluate conventional wisdom. These videos may act as a spark for societal reflection and the reconsideration of detrimental behaviours.
3. Empathy and Compassion: Films have the power to arouse viewers' empathy and compassion. These videos can humanise the subject, make it relatable, and evoke empathy in the viewer by

illustrating the emotional pain endured by victims of honour killings. This emotional link can help people better appreciate the anguish that victims of honor-based violence go through.

4. Influence on Attitudes and Behaviours: Although the degree of this influence can vary, films have the ability to mould attitudes and guide behaviour. Movies about honour killing that strongly criticise the practise and call for change may help change public perceptions. They might encourage viewers to oppose restrictive customs and support programmes designed to stop honor-based violence.

5. Activity and Dialogue Catalyst: Films can spur activity and discussion about honour killings. They can stimulate dialogue in homes, neighbourhoods, and educational institutions, giving individuals the chance to express their opinions, dispel myths, and promote social change. Films can also motivate viewers to join campaigns and organisations that work to address the problem.

It's crucial to remember, though, that films cannot end the problem of honour killings on their own. Real change necessitates a multifaceted strategy that includes victim assistance programmes, education programmes, awareness campaigns, and legal reforms. While films about honour killings can help to spread awareness and encourage discussion, they should be viewed as a part of a larger initiative to address the root problems and advance gender equality, human rights, and social justice.

Media coverage or role played by International media in respect of Honour killings

It is crucial to remember that honour killings are not unique to any one nation or faith. Even the international media has been discussing the problem for a while.

However, other people believe that only a small percentage of honour killings make the press, while the majority pass unreported.[9]

When reporting on these stories, the media frequently uses gate keeping tactics and has its own objectives. The crucial thing to remember is that honour killings have gained attention from the media both domestically and internationally. The media must reject biases based on religion, caste, community, etc. and investigate these incidents from a human perspective.[10]

United Kingdom

It is significant to remember that the media's function is not without difficulties. Concerns about sensationalism, cultural prejudices, and the possibility of stereotype perpetuation must be addressed. For responsible media coverage of honour killings, ethical journalistic practises, compassion, and a commitment to truthful representation are crucial.

In general, the UK's media has the ability to inform, educate, and shape the public's perception of honour killings. The media may aid in the fight against honor-based violence and the advancement of societal reform by raising awareness, dispelling myths, and fostering debate.

Here are some ways in which the media in the UK has played a role in addressing honor killings:

1. Raising Awareness: The media is essential in educating the public about honour killings and bringing them to their attention. Media outlets have highlighted particular examples of honour killings through news articles, investigative reports, and documentaries, bringing light on the problem and its effects.
2. Covering Legal procedures: The media frequently covers legal procedures in honour killing cases, including updates and analysis. The public may gain a better understanding of the difficulties involved in these situations, the legal system that surrounds them, and the results of legal action thanks to this coverage.

3. **Dispelling Stereotypes:** The media has a duty to dispel common myths and false notions about honour killings. Media organisations can combat stigmatisation by disseminating correct information and encouraging nuanced dialogues.

4. **Giving Voice to Survivors and Advocates:** The media gives honour killing victims and their families a forum to tell their tales and make their voices heard. Survivors and advocates can question society standards and push for change through interviews, features, and personal tales.

5. **Fostering Dialogue and Debate:** Media outlets promote public dialogue and debate on honour killings by creating a forum for various viewpoints. The media can promote discussion on the underlying causes, effects, and potential remedies of honor-based violence through opinion pieces, panels, and expert interviews.

6. **Holding Authorities Accountable:** As a watchdog, the media may hold authorities responsible for how they handle honour killings. Investigative reporting can reveal systemic flaws,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA [11]

Honour killings are very uncommon in the United States, but when they do occur, the media frequently reports on them. Honour killings may not garner as much media attention in the United States as they do in other nations, but the media still has an impact on how the public views and discusses the topic.[12]

Here are some ways how the media works in USA

- **News coverage:** When honour killings take place in the US, media sources cover the stories and inform the public of the news. This coverage can assist spread awareness of the problem and educate readers about the details of individual instances, such as their circumstances, legal history, and resolutions.
- **Education and Public Awareness:** By producing in-depth reporting, investigative journalism, and documentaries, media outlets can help to educate the public about honour killings. These

initiatives can contribute to raising public knowledge of the problem, its cultural context, and its effects on people and communities.

- **Challenging Stereotypes:** By giving accurate information and a range of viewpoints, media outlets can assist in eradicating generalisations about particular cultures or religions and foster a more nuanced knowledge of the intricate causes behind these crimes.
- **Humanising Victims and Communities:** Media coverage can make honour killing victims and the communities they affect feel more like people. The media may help those affected by honour-based violence by sharing their stories and providing survivors and their families a voice. This encourages empathy, understanding, and support.
- **Advocacy and Policy conversations:** The media can participate in conversations about policy and advocacy for the prevention of honour killings. Media outlets can encourage discussions about the underlying causes of these crimes and potential preventative, legal, and support service methods through opinion pieces, interviews, and analyses.
- **It's crucial to remember that the level and type of media coverage of honour killings in the United States may change depending on a number of variables, including the severity of the crime, the locality, and the current state of the news cycle. Media outlets also have their own editorial freedom to choose which stories to cover and how to present them.**

Canada

In Canada, the media can be a powerful tool in the fight against honour killings. The media may support victims and their families, advocate for changes that can help to prevent honour killings, and promote awareness of the issue by covering it fairly and accurately.

The media has a duty to report on honour killings in a sensitive and accurate manner. By doing this, the media may support victims and their families, help spread awareness of this problem, and promote policies that will help Canada end honour killings.

In the following ways Media has worked so far in Canada while addressing the issue of Honour killings.

- In 2014, the media's coverage of Aqsa Parvez's slaying contributed to a national dialogue on honour killings. 16-year-old Pakistani-Canadian Aqsa Parvez was murdered by her father and brother because she would not wed the man they had preselected for her. The case's media coverage contributed to greater recognition of the problem of honour killings and the demand for more care for victims and their families.
- The Shafia family murders were covered in the media in 2009, which contributed to an increase in knowledge of honour killings in Canada. The Shafia family was found guilty of carrying out an honour killing by killing four of their daughters and a family member. The media's coverage of this case contributed to dispelling myths about honour killings and fostering awareness of the cultural elements that influence these crimes.

Adverse effects or impact of Media Coverage on similar heinous crime like honour killings on public at large

The persistence of honour killings in India is in large part due to the media. The belief that honour killings are acceptable and that the families of the women who are slain in this manner have been brought to disgrace by their actions is frequently reinforced by media coverage of honour killings. This kind of coverage may make it harder for women to leave violent relationships and may also result in more violence directed against women.

A growing movement has emerged in recent years to refute how honour killings are portrayed in the media. The media has been urged by activists to avoid sensationalising these murders and instead pay attention to the human cost of this violence. They have also urged the media to

examine the underlying reasons of honour killings and to criticise the patriarchal ideologies that encourage this kind of bloodshed.

The media supports honour killings in a number of different ways. First, these murders are frequently sensationalised in the media, which can influence the public's perception of them as acceptable. For instance, the media may highlight the specifics of the murder, such as the technique utilised or the number of participants. It may be more challenging for women to leave abusive relationships if they believe honour killings are widespread and acceptable, as a result of this type of coverage.

Second, women who are killed in honour killings are frequently depicted in the media as having brought shame on their family.

The concept that women are accountable for upholding the honour of their families and that doing so can result in punishment can be reinforced by this kind of coverage. Because of their fear of being killed, women may find it more challenging to report abuse or seek assistance.

Third, the underlying causes of honour killings are frequently ignored by the media. Patriarchal ideas about family honour and societal honour are frequently at the heart of honour killings. By focusing on the underlying causes of honour killings, such as the gender imbalance and discrimination that women experience in India, the media can play a part in refuting these ideas.

Negative effects on society of honour killing-based films

The most sophisticated and potent art form being practised is cinema. India has a long history of cinema, and it has a significant influence on young people. People watch films for a variety of personal reasons, but regardless of the motivation, watching films has an effect on viewers' mind, both consciously and unconsciously.

Films about honour killings may have beneficial consequences, but they may also have negative repercussions on society. These may consist of:

- **Sensationalism and Glorification:** By emphasising the violent elements for dramatic effect, certain films may unintentionally sensationalise honour killings. This could desensitise the audience and lead to a skewed understanding of the problem. These films have the potential to unintentionally romanticise or glorify violent acts, which could be damaging to efforts to stop honor-based violence if not handled appropriately.
- **Supporting preconceptions:** Films have the ability to influence perception and support preconceptions that already exist. One-dimensional or stereotyped depictions of particular communities or cultures in honour killing-based films have the potential to reinforce negative preconceptions and contribute to further stigmatisation. The development of societal peace and understanding may be hampered by this.
- **Misinterpretation and misrepresentation:** Audiences' perceptions and interpretations of the content of films might vary. Sometimes, rather than interpreting a film as a critique, audiences may misinterpret its meaning and believe it to be an endorsement or justification of honour killings. Misinformation and harmful beliefs can be perpetuated by misrepresenting or misinterpreting the problem.
- **Copycat Behaviour:** In rare instances, films that portray honour killings may unintentionally encourage people to emulate or repeat the behaviours they see on television. In order to minimise any potential negative effects, it is crucial to handle delicate themes carefully. This phenomenon, known as "copycat behaviour," has been found in a variety of circumstances.
- **Victim Blaming and Stigmatisation:** Films on honour killings may unintentionally encourage victim blaming and stigmatisation. Instead of addressing the underlying causes and structural problems that underlie honor-based violence, the films risk reinforcing damaging narratives

that place the responsibility on the victims themselves if they place a heavy emphasis on the acts or behaviour of the victims.

A divisive and complicated issue is how films may encourage crimes like honour killings in India. While there isn't enough concrete proof to prove that films encourage honour killings, there are theories and viewpoints that raise the possibility that they might.

The glorifying of violence, regressive gender depictions, and sensationalised tales, according to critics, might unintentionally contribute to the normalisation or romanticization of honour killings. They argue that frequent exposure to such content can alter perceptions and attitudes, especially in impressionable or weak people, perhaps encouraging the repetition of such crimes.

It is important to highlight that there is disagreement over the scope of this influence and how it affects actual behaviour in society. There are other counterarguments that emphasise how deeply embedded complicated social, cultural, and patriarchal aspects are in honour killings. These elements, which precede the invention of motion pictures, are in charge of forming the mentality that accepts or excuses honor-based violence.

Conclusion-

Media can be torch bearer and can help in curbing honour killings in India by taking certain initiatives such as-

- Increasing public awareness of the problem: By honestly and equitably reporting on honour killings, the media can aid in increasing public awareness of the problem. This can assist in dispelling the myths and prejudices that frequently surround honour killings and in breaking the taboo surrounding the subject.

- Challenging destructive cultural norms: The media can also work to dismantle destructive cultural norms that support honour killings. For instance, the media might refute the notion that women belong to their families and must be slain if they bring dishonour upon them.
- Fostering understanding and tolerance: The media may foster understanding and tolerance among various populations. Due to the increased knowledge and acceptance of people from diverse origins, this may help lower the probability of honour killings.

The media can play a specific role in preventing honour killings in addition to these broader duties by doing the following:

- Covering specific cases: To highlight the human cost of honour killings and draw attention to the problem, the media might cover specific examples of honour killings.
- Interviewing experts: The media can speak with authorities on honour killings to gain their perspectives on the problem and to find out more about how to put a stop to it.

The media has the ability to influence public opinion and can be a key factor in putting a stop to honour killings in India. The media may contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society for women by criticising how honour killings are portrayed in the media and by exploring the roots of this violence.

The media may support efforts to put an end to honour killings in a number of ways. First, the media should stop making these murders into headlines. The media should concentrate on the human cost of this brutality rather than the specifics of the murder. The media can also cover the testimonies of honour killing survivors and the efforts of the groups fighting to put an end to this brutality.

Second, the media has the power to dispel the myths that encourage honour killings. Women can be portrayed in the media as powerful, self-reliant people with the freedom to pursue their lives as they see fit. The concept that women killed in honour killings have degraded their families can also be refuted by the media.

Third, the public can learn about honour killings from the media. The media may inform people about the factors that contribute to this violence and the toll that it takes on victims of crime. Information about how to stop honour killings and how to help those who have been victimised by this violence can also be found in the media.

The persistence of honour killings in India is in large part due to the media. The belief that honour killings are acceptable and that the families of the women who are slain in this manner have been brought to disgrace by their actions is frequently reinforced by media coverage of honour killings. This kind of coverage may make it harder for women to leave violent relationships and may also result in more violence directed against women.

Filmmakers and the media must take an ethical approach to the subject of honour killings, making sure that the stories do not trivialise or sensationalise the problem. In order to reduce any negative effects and promote a deeper understanding of the issue, collaboration with experts, community engagement, and accurate and balanced portrayals are crucial. Additionally, to address the underlying causes of honor-based violence in society, extensive activities that go beyond films are required. The greater cultural environment, which significantly contributes to the persistence of honour killings, must be taken into account. This background includes social conventions, traditional beliefs, and gender inequity. To address these fundamental problems, extensive measures are needed that go beyond the effect of media and include education, legislative changes, public awareness campaigns, and community involvement.

Article 19's guarantee of the freedom of speech and expression is not unqualified; it is subject to reasonable limitations set by the government where doing so is necessary for maintaining morality, public order, or India's sovereignty and integrity. Article 19(2) of the Indian Constitution contains a full description of these limitations.

The freedom of speech and expression grants filmmakers the creative freedom to investigate and depict social concerns, especially delicate subjects, like films about honour killings. But in India,

the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), also referred to as the Censor Board, controls and approves films for public viewing.

In its discretion, the CBFC may demand changes, edits, or cuts to films that it believes violate the limitations outlined in Article 19(2) or the rules established by the board. These changes aim to establish a balance between the right to free speech and the need to uphold morality, decency, and public order.

But it is important to remember that Bollywood and other Indian films typically condemn honour killings and depict them as violent crimes. Movies are frequently used by filmmakers as a platform to confront outdated beliefs, increase awareness, and encourage societal change.

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