



Patriarchal Ideology of Honour and Honour Crimes in India

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Abstract

Honour crimes cut across racial, religious, cultural and regional divides. The horrific and horrendous waves of massacring, young and innocent women daring to choose their life-partners much against the accepted social mores by the allegedly supreme caste and religious groups; the culture of regulating and controlling their conduct and life and amputating, shattering the personalities marching against the accepted social and patriarchal traditions in the guise of protecting the family, caste, clan or tribe 'Honour' is rapidly engulfing the entire ocean of mankind. Amidst this scenario, it becomes inevitable to examine the status of woman in India with special reference to the patriarchal ideology of honour residing in her; social perception of the cross marriages and honour crimes in the Indian subcontinent and the role of Khap panchayats in terrorizing the Indian social scene. The paper also chalks out the role desired from the law makers, enforcement agencies and the community members for checking the cruel culture of victimizing the female population for protecting and restoring the assumed notions of honour.

Keywords: Inter Caste; Gotra; Endogamy; Exogamy; Khaps; Honour Killings.

Introduction

Honour is the most cherished value in the Indian sub-continental patriarchal families irrespective of the caste, regional and religious identities. Families gain and lose honour through money, power and improper behaviour of women. Actions appropriate according to dharma maintain the purity and honour of the family, lineage and caste while the inappropriate ones defile it (Chakravarti, 2003, pp. 148-149). Emphasis on family honour is basic to the Indian social framework since the family still constitutes a very potent force in the social structure.

The ideology of honour, *i.e.*, *izzat* being a gendered notion in India, both men and women embody notions of honour in totally different ways. Woman is the repository of

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the family honour as a daughter, wife and mother while man regulates it. The greatest threat to this honour lies in the woman, in her body, conduct due to her reproducing and procreating capacity (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 16-17). Honour is presumed to be a female-linked commodity coupled with the male prerogative to ensure that she does not jeopardize its delicate balance at any cost. As a girl grows up, burden of shame accompanying her femaleness makes it difficult for her to be proud of her body (Nabar, 1995, p. 87). Being a passive recipient of the male seed, she dishonours her family by her shameful physical conduct. Upon this social perception of the man's creative ability, the whole notion of honour is built (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 16-17). Since she represents fertility and growth, separate from the male and not under his control, her power is seen as dangerous, malevolent and potentially a destructive force (Dewan, 2000, p. 35).

According to this ideology, common to all the cultures and civilizations of the world, since the blood flowing in the child's veins belongs to the father, it gives the child, particularly a male child, an identity of the father's lineage. The agnatic kin continues through the male members who serve as the conduit for passing the common blood to the next generation. Caste endogamy, caste purity ensures this patriliney and emphasizes the need for controlling the female sexuality to assure the paternity and lineage of the offspring. A man's honour largely lies in his ability to impose such control on his womenfolk. All decisions regarding her body are made by the male members of her family and caste. The whole clan, caste and community are the co-sharers of this honour as blood ties of the family extend to them (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 16-17). The social relationship of marriage subdues this dangerous force of the female. Male acting as a restraining factor becomes supreme by subordinating her in marriage (Dewan, 2000, p. 35).

Table 1 substantiates that the essential and innate nature of women is identified with her sexuality represented as sinful, thereby requiring male control for protecting and preserving the patrilineal succession of property, patriarchal caste hierarchy and caste culture. The present society is still under the impression that woman is inferior to man, much due to these religious and juristic texts and their erroneous interpretation.

Subordination of woman is proportionately related to caste hierarchy. Higher the constraint on her, the higher is the caste in the hierarchy. Control is exercised over her sexuality through arranged marriage, child marriage, prohibition of divorce, strict monogamy for her, sati, ban on widow remarriage and strict seclusion of the widow. Even after death, men maintain their widows as their exclusive sexual property (Liddle & Joshi, 1986, pp. 50, 57, 59-60, 64, 89, 91-92).

Being the repository of the family and caste honour, a woman is rendered an object of protection and violence at the same time. The fear of losing this honour makes the men rationalize and justify masculine aggression and violence against her. Violence against her within the four walls of the house in the capacity of a daughter, sister, wife and mother is widely accepted and legitimized under the patriarchal order and ultimately transcends caste divisions. Violence against her has a public face and is always committed in response to the cultural expectations of the larger community (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 17-18). Even if the family wishes, it is not allowed to settle the matter of inter-caste marriages amicably but is compelled to treat it as a matter of honour by the community which is ready to take over if the family is unwilling, thereby forcing the family to sacrifice their daughters in the collective interests of the caste group. Thus, the concept of honour operates at the cost of human sentiments and values.

Table 1. The Innate Nature of Woman and Control over her

Manu	Yajnavalkya	Satpatha Brahmana	Mahabharata	Apastamba Dharmasutra	Buddha
<p>*Manu (IX.15-16) lays down that every man should exert himself strenuously to guard them (Chakravarti, 2003, p. 71).</p> <p>*Manusmriti.V.148 provides that in childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her Lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.</p> <p>*Manusmriti.V.149 provides that the woman must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband or sons. By leaving them, she would make both, her own and her husband's families contemptible.</p> <p>*Manusmriti.V.151 further lays down that him to whom her father may give her or her brother with the father's permission, she shall obey as long as he lives and when he is dead, she must not insult his memory (Buhler, 1990, p. 195).</p>	<p>*Yajnavalkya, II, 175 provides that women should be protected.</p>	<p>*Satpatha Brahmana holds that a woman, a sudra and a crow are the embodiments of untruth, sin and darkness. The congenital fickleness of women is pertinent to the problem of managing the overflowing & uncontrollable sexuality of women (Chakravarti, 2003, p. 71).</p>	<p>*Mahabharata (XII.38.30), women have been sinful from the very beginning.</p> <p>*According to Shantiparva in Mahabharata, dwarfs, hump backed persons, lean men, lame and blind men, idiots, eunuchs and women are to be excluded from the place where a king holds any consultations. This barring from responsibilities is confirmed by the ancient law givers Manu, Shukra and Chanakya (Singh, 2005, p. 3).</p> <p>*Anusasana Parva of Mahabharata elaborates the opinion of Bhishma Pitamaha about the nature of women who said that female is naturally a temptress and a lurer and is not endowed with strength of will enough to resist temptation, therefore, she is always in need of protection by men (Sreenivasa Murthy, 1993, pp. 114-115).</p>	<p>*Apastamba Dharmasutra (II.6.13.7) rules that the husband should ensure that no other man goes near his wife lest his 'seed' gets into her (Chakravarti, 2003, p.69).</p>	<p>*Buddha opines that women ought not to be entrusted with responsibilities as they are short-tempered, full of passion, envious and stupid; have no place in public assemblies, do not carry on business and do not earn their living by any profession (Sreenivasa Murthy, 1993, p. 115).</p>

Inter Caste Marriages in India

In spite of strict caste endogamous rules in India, inter-caste marriages are a regular feature (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 46). Inbreeding among different castes or varnas, known as *sankarat sarvavarnam* (Roohi & Samaddar, 2009, p. 509), *jati-sankara* or *varna-sankara* (Sharma, 2004, p. 67) was a common feature in ancient India. This is evident from Manusmriti which deals elaborately with the rules relating to marriage among the mixed castes in Chapter III.43-44 and Chapter X.25-51 (Buhler, 1990, pp. 83, 407-414) and Yajnavalkyasmriti dealing with shares of sons born from wives of different castes (Altekar, 1959, pp. 76-78). Manu allowed a woman to choose her own partner only if her parents failed to arrange her marriage within three years of her attaining puberty (Manu 9.90-91; Chakravarti, 2003, p. 53).

The rules of marriage within the caste were established in the post Aryan period when caste became hereditary (Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 61). Though women enjoyed equal rights in selecting marital partner in the Vedic period (Dewan, 2000, p. 33; Rao, 2008, p. 21; Bowen, 1998, p. 57), the parents exercised great control in this regard. Festive gatherings called as *Samanas* provided ample opportunity of love-making to the young men and women ending in marriage (Tripathy, 2000, pp. 32-33). Kshatriya brides enjoyed the right of selecting consorts in *svayamvaras* (Altekar, 1959, p. 65).

In the post-vedic period, the rights and privileges of women came to be restricted. In the fifth century A.D, selection of partners by the girls without being authorized by their guardians was regarded as unmannerly (Altekar, 1959, p. 69). After the 10 century A.D, they came to be further disapproved due to the widening cultural differences between the *Brahmanas* and the other castes (Altekar, 1959, pp. 76-78). Amidst conflicts and opposition, instances of inter-caste, inter-religious marriages have been on the rise in the post-colonial India due to westernization and woman empowerment. Though these marriages are constitutional, there exists no social acceptance for them (Tripathy, 2000, p. 95).

Honour Crimes in India

Prohibition of inter-caste, inter-religious, intra-gotra marriages, inter and intra-regional marriages are an indication of forcible imposition of the male dominated hierarchical patriarchy rigidly segmenting the whole mankind into various mutually rival groups. The concepts of 'honour' and 'shame' operate to restore the male dominance which is presumed to have been compromised and endangered by the post-colonial legal empowerment of woman in India.

As defined by Abu Odeh, honour crime is the killing of a woman by her father or brother for engaging in or being suspected of engaging in sexual practices before or outside marriage (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, p. 5) and includes different types of manifest violent behavior against her like assault, confinement, imprisonment, interference with choice in marriage, declaring her to be minor and insane including her brutal murder (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, p. 4). Gender based violence against women is defined as violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman and affects her disproportionately (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, p. 24). By invoking the twin notions of honour and dishonour, the families try to regulate the inappropriate behaviour of the woman. What is sacred and inviolable is *izzat* or *ghairat* i.e., honour and it is always presumed to be justified to kill and die for honour (Omvedt, 1990, pp. 5-6). An action to uphold honour or izzat is always a male prerogative while women may only incite action.

Different types of contentious and mixed marriages like those violating the rule of caste endogamy, territorial exogamy, religious exogamy, widow remarriage, gotra exogamy are treated as an attack upon *izzat* (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, p. 8) and have mainly led to honour crimes, confrontations and violence in India. The agricultural caste groups in India follow caste endogamy, village and clan exogamy and territorial exogamy while settling marriages. Within the same caste, the Hindus follow the rule of gotra exogamy. The concept of caste honour is usually appropriated by the upper castes in India who do not recognize any honour being possessed by the lower caste groups (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 19). Since inter-caste marriages tend to weaken the differences existing among the different caste groups and disturb the caste hierarchies, marriage or a love affair between a high caste girl and a low caste boy is always contested and criminalized. Even the police and the judiciary at times act as mute spectators and passive supporters of the honour protectors.

The punishment for violating the rule of endogamy and exogamy is expulsion, excommunication from the caste, the killing of the mother and child and even sometimes ritual death (Chakravarti, 2003, p. 68). The rules of excommunication are horrendous since no one would dine, drink, transact economically with the outcaste, the barber would not shave him, the *Brahman* would refuse to officiate religious functions for him, no man would marry his children and the attendants of the dead would refuse to perform the funeral rites (Banerjee-Dube, 2008, p. 71).

In Northern India, particularly in the Haryana region, young persons are challenging the caste and kinship ideologies upheld by the senior male members of the caste by breaching the sexual codes and taboos, by defying demands of caste status, hypergamy and village exogamy and are thereby, discarding the notions of honour. Elopement of the young couples in love in defiance of their family, caste-village customs and sentiments result in direct violence perpetrated by the male family members on them and more particularly on the girl. Breach of the caste and community moral norms, family and kinship codes by a woman leads to greater social pressure and protest since it is treated as a direct attack on the patriarchal power and is deemed fit to be crushed, controlled and channelled. Women's respectability determines that of the men, family and the whole caste. This kind of social thought leads to either killing the woman or forcing her to commit suicide by the family members. Many times, she is forced to enter into a greatly compromised marriage where the bridegroom is either a widower, an old man, a man with children, a handicapped or drunkard, not matching her educational qualifications or a fit for nothing person. Thereafter, the family severs all connections with her (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 10-11).

Whenever, a young couple elopes after marriage or for marrying, usually the girl's family tries to criminalize their action and contest the validity of the marriage. It is alleged that the girl is a minor and charges of kidnapping, abduction, wrongful confinement or rape is slapped against her husband and his family members for harassing them. For the loss of their family's honour, the honour of the offending family is attacked. This strategy is adopted to force the married couple to surface or to withdraw from the much disputed marriage. After surfacing, in majority of the cases, they run the risk of humiliation, physical injury, death and decisions of caste panchayats. Death penalty is regarded a valid method of retrieving the lost honour. At times, the woman is pressurized by her family to support their case of kidnapping or is sometimes solitarily confined by the family members or is sent to the state run protective homes (Welchman & Hossain, 2005, pp. 308-330).

For re-establishing the family honour, presumed guilty girl or woman must be retrieved and punished and cannot be disowned. Usually absorbing her back into the traditional *biradari* network being a difficult task, her physical elimination appears to be a better honourable option open to her family. She is made to take the stigma which can be removed only by extinguishing her *i.e.*, the object of dishonour. On the contrary, no stigma attaches to the perpetrators of the honour crimes by the society who are absolved of their guilt on the premise that sacrificing the natural bonds of love and kinship for preserving and restoring honour purifies the family.

Rampant in North India, honour crimes are slowly showing their ugly head even in other parts of the country. Failing to resist effectively due to their filial values and familiarity with the perpetrator (Ahuja, 2006, p. 243), Indian women have been the victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation and face the risk of the worst violence, terror, deprivation, discrimination and devaluation. Moreover, violence and crimes behind 'closed doors' hardly leaves any remedy for them (Walker, 1987, p. 25). Preservation of family honour at all costs results into her safety, choices and rights being compromised.

Terrorizing the social scene: Khap Panchayats

Panchayat, the governing body of each caste in India, enforces conduct appropriate to the caste. The caste and village councils exercise complete control on an individual's conduct (Devi, 1998, p. 48). Being part of the socio-political life of village communities, they are informal, decision-making, caste based bodies consisting of the elderly and wise men drawn from their respective castes. They are mostly dominated by the land-owning class and the upper caste members who are not elected or self-appointed but are the members by consensus of the community and sometimes hold the post by heredity (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 33-35, 96). Since caste perpetuates through the institution of marriage (Rajshekar, 2007), the dominant caste in the region arrogates to itself the power of regulating the marriage behavior of the endogamous groups (Chakravarti, 2003, pp. 33-34). The size and composition of the panchayat vary with the gravity of the problem (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 97-98).

Khap panchayat, an endogamous, clannish institution, usually a Jat body exists around Delhi, some parts of Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and the adjoining areas. It is a gotra centric panchayat covers a cluster of villages dominated by a particular gotra of Jats. All Khap members are supposedly linked through blood and a common genealogy leading to the evolution of many marital taboos and the ban on same village and same gotra marriages. Marriages within the neighbouring villages belonging to other Khaps are also banned. Any marriage in violation of these rules is met with stringent punishments and barbaric edicts by the Khap panchayats like annulling the marriage, declaring the married couple as siblings and dissolving their marital tie, ostracizing the families and ordering killings, [Chaudhry, D.R (2010, August 1)], temporary or permanent ex-communication, corporal punishment, religious expiation (Kuppuswamy, 1989, pp. 185, 192; Gupta, 1991, p. 37) and forcing the girl to divorce her husband. Death executed by the caste panchayats is one of the worst articulations of violence. Usually, violence and death are considered preferable to condoning or accepting a mixed marriage (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 163).

The sanctions also include nominal or substantial fining, ritual expiation, public humiliation which means blackening the face or rubbing the nose in the dust before the aggrieved party or the entire gathering, touching other's feet, shaving the head or drinking or dipping the nose in the urine of one or more persons, beating, giving feast to the caste

members, outcasting, expelling from the village or requiring the offender to repent by seeking forgiveness of the village elderly (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 98-100). Outcasting being a serious punishment requires an inter-village panchayat of the caste members (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 100).

Thus, the much disapproved inter-caste marriages are usually resolved by the family members in a confidential way by forceful elimination of the couple or the girl. But, when the news spreads in the wider community, it is tackled by the community acting through the traditional caste panchayat wielding wide dictatorial power as extra-judicial authorities, with almost no legal knowledge and imposing justice according to its notions. Applying and enforcing repressive gender and caste codes, they attempt to operate as parallel legal systems in the country. The intervention of these traditional bodies has been at the cost of individual rights, more particularly woman's rights (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 12-14, 139).

In many cases, even if a family approves an inter-caste marriage or itself arranges such marriage, the caste panchayats have objected to such marriages and have penalized the families by expelling them from the *biradari* or by socially boycotting them (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 168-172). *Biradari* refers to not just one concrete structural unit at the village level but rather to patrilineal connection, real, putative or fictional and includes the agnates and cognates. It sometimes refers to the entire village, irrespective of the differences in caste, class or creed. Observing the norms of the *biradari* is must for the *izzat* of the caste, group or village. *Biradari* uses caste panchayats for settling issues of marriage and sexual affairs amongst other matters (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 95-96).

Each caste has its own *biradari* to enforce its rules but when the matter cannot be settled by the caste panchayat of a particular caste group due to few households of that caste in a village, it is usually referred to the dominant caste of the region which then assumes the power of enforcing the internal behavior of the endogamous group (Chowdhary, 2007, p. 150).

For deciding a matter, the traditional panchayat mobilizes a large number of people on the basis of family, kin, got, caste, community and village, even from outside the local area, making the panchayat all the more powerful. The dominant caste leaders settle the dispute of the castes below them only by the unanimous consensus of the presiding leaders. If they do not agree, the panchayat meeting is dissolved without any decision being taken. Later, either a similar panchayat or a larger panchayat involving many more villages is reconvened. Any decision to which the powerful elements in the village strongly oppose cannot be taken. But a powerful person can ignore the wishes of the majority, if he had not participated in the decision or disagrees with it. Once the decision is taken, its enforcement is the responsibility of the leaders of the village in which the penalized party lives (Chowdhary, 2007, pp. 98-100). As per the recent diktat issued by the Khap Maha-panchayat, killings cannot be avoided in same gotra marriages since they are immoral in the Hindu society and should be banned and the guilty should be punished [Pandey, (2010, November 15)]. Thus, the Indian social set up operates as the major catalyzing factor behind the increasing rate of the honour crimes committed against women in India.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Violence against woman clubbed with the prohibitions on marital choice is a total negation of her rights. Since, the right to choose life partner at the time of marriage constitutes an integral part of her right of self-preservation, majority of the International

Conventions, Declarations and Protocols fall in line by emphasizing that her consent and choice in the matters relating to marriage should be weighed and prohibit resultant violence against her due to the difference of opinion in these matters.

The maiden attempt specifically addressing the issue of honour crimes against women at the international level has been the adoption of Resolution 55/66 by the General Assembly explicitly identified the crimes based on the human right issue and clearly voice the obligation of the State parties to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of such crimes and provide protection to the victims. Again, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women emphasized the need to enact legislation for removing honour as a ground of defense in cases of assault or murder of a female family member.

Though Article 51 (e) of the Indian Constitution enumerates the fundamental duty to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women, its true realization in spirit is much awaited. Inter-caste marriages have been validated in India as early as in 1949 by the Hindu Marriages Validity Act, 1949. The Special Marriage Act, 1872 and 1954 legalize marriage between members of different castes and religions. Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, diametrically against the customary marriage rules in India, offers more freedom in marriage by doing away with identification of marital partners according to caste and permits both sagotra and inter-caste marriages. Preventing a woman from marrying a person of her choice is an emotional abuse under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Despite these laws, violence against women in the name of honour is on the rise. Honour crimes in the name of family and caste honour and ethnic culture are the most degrading human act and the woman continues to suffer due to the utter failure of the criminal justice system and inadequate protective measures.

Even the Hindu Dharma has been very vocal regarding the rights of woman. As emphasized by Manusmriti.X.63, *Ahimsa Dharma i.e.*, Abstention from injuring others ought to be upheld by all the four castes (Jois, 2002, p. 22; Buhler, 1990, p. 416). Manusmriti.III.55 prescribes highest respect, regard and protection for the women by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law throughout their life. Because the welfare of all of them is possible only, if they are honoured and adorned (Jois, 2002, p. 30; Buhler, 1990, p. 5). Manusmriti.III.57 states that if the women folk live in grief then the whole family perishes but the house prospers if they are happy (Jois, 2002, p. 30; Buhler, 1990, p. 85).

Rigveda, Mandala 5, Sukta 60, Mantra 5 emphasize that none is superior (ajyestasaha) or inferior (akanishthasha). Since all are brothers, need is to strive collectively for the interest and progress of all (Jois, 2002, p. xii). Thus, there is the need to protect the rights of all in the society including the women for protecting Dharma, lest all will get destroyed (Manusmriti.VIII.15 –Buhler, 1990, p. 255; Jois, 2002, p. 27). Carrying forward the spirit of Dharma, there is a need to adopt some of the measures specified below for curbing honour crimes in India:

- The Project of the Government of India's Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) has identified 2,800 castes including 450 Scheduled Castes, 461 Scheduled Tribes and 766 Backward Castes (Rajshekar, 2007, p. 1). Despite all efforts, opposition and criticism, unfortunately castes still persist in India display their tremendous vitality and resilience. Their total abolition is neither possible nor desirable since

- they provide a sense of identity, security, affiliation and attachment to ones kith and kin. There is a need to transform these castes and sub-castes into mutually endogamous groups. Though higher education, urbanization, social mobilization and sensitization have to some extent weakened the grip of the caste system, much needs to be still done. Once the importance attached to purity and pollution is withdrawn, caste system will end (Rajshekar, 2007, p. 51).
- The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as a solvent of caste (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar).
 - Since gotras were originally merely surnames, members of the same gotra having no real tie of consanguinity, prohibition on the sagotra marriages makes little sense now. Even in the presence of such a tie, it would be highly irrational to prohibit marriages since the members of any particular gotra today are removed by hundreds of generations from its original founder. Again, the idea that the members of a gotra descended from a *rishi* is not historically true since many gotra names are territorial or professional in significance (Altekar, 1959, pp. 74-75). The general public ought to be made aware of this reality.
 - The powers of the caste panchayats need to be curtailed by appropriate legislation.
 - The common man and the general public ought to be enlightened about the importance of the female population, the value of life and the horrors of honour crimes through massive and large scale campaigns, public debates and discussion, media coverage *etc.* The family and the community attitude towards these crimes can be combated and checked only by having a discourse with them and no strategy in this direction will be successful without their consent and cooperation.
 - A wider social movement needs to be launched for making the women aware of their legal rights and in making them understand and accept that there exists no violation of the family honour or caste honour, if she educates herself, develops her personality, expresses her desire in making marital choices, develops friendships with opposite sex and chooses to work.
 - The judiciary, elders in the society, parents, young men, police and lawmakers need to be gender sensitized. Honour crimes can be properly checked only if the police and judiciary consider it as the most heinous crimes and meet out stringent punishment. The criminal law measures to prevent, prosecute and punish the honour crimes need to be strong and effective and no leniency ought to be provided to the perpetrators of these crimes on the justification of any custom, tradition or religious considerations.
 - In India, there is no specific criminal law to deal with the offence of honour crimes. Need is there to either enact a special law for curbing this menace or to add specific provisions in the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
 - Women and girls should be trained in the skill of self defense in protecting themselves.

Since all the human beings, irrespective of their caste, tribe, region, religious identities have shared certain common attributes like speech, sexual activity, birth, death, they all belong to one caste *i.e.*, *manav jati*. As rightly emphasised by the Bhagavad Gita, *sarva-bhuta-hite-ratah i.e.*, good of all and *sarve janah sukhino bhavantu i.e.*, happiness of all is of utmost importance (Sharma, 2004, p. 56). Thus, marital relations amongst persons irrespective of any caste or religious considerations ought to be encouraged and opposition to them in the form of crimes and violence being against the happiness of men needs to be

discouraged. There exists a need to liberate and emancipate women from the shackles of ancient law, traditions and customs for better promotion and readjustment of their rights on the lines of equality, dignity and non-exploitation. It has to be borne in mind that there exists no honour in domestic violence, honour killings and crimes but only shame.

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