



Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 November 2016

Any information on children born outside marriage and any discrimination faced by the children or by the couple.

An article published in the Pakistani newspaper Daily Times states:

“Since time immemorial, societies have been shaped to oppress, control and punish women whether or not they have been at fault. One of the biggest punishments they face even in the modern world is the fate of their children, who are not given due recognition for the simple fact that they have been born out of wedlock. Stigmatisation is higher in a country like Pakistan where many parents, usually mothers, are left with no choice but to abandon their illegitimate children or, in most heinous circumstances, kill them just moments after the child's first cry.

Those who survive the ordeal of being called a bastard child spend the rest of their lives in shame and destitution. With no one to look after them, these children are helpless in getting themselves recognised in the world as beings worthy of living a decent life. They are denied recognition and are abandoned to be left on their own and to provide for their own food, shelter and income. Though there are many families that adopt them, usually from the mother's side, most remain out of luck and succumb to a world of crime due to their being ostracised in a society that considers itself morally righteous. In Pakistan, the law considers all children constitutionally equal in terms of inheritance but in the case of the family laws for Muslims, illegitimate children cannot have any share in inheritance, both from the biological father and the mother, depending on the interpretation of the different Islamic schools of thought. In most cases, the invocation of the Muslim family laws in such matters also triggers the Hudood laws, which have their own penalties for committing zina (adultery or fornication), the reason for which the matter of inheritance for the illegitimate children by Muslim families is not pursued in courts at all, thus denying these children any future, one that remains bleak for their survival in this cut-throat world.” (Daily Times (11 December 2014) *Illegitimate children in Pakistan*)

A report from the German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle states:

“In Pakistan, abortion is illegal, and so is adultery - creating a situation where hundreds of children born out of wedlock are secretly killed each year. Their bodies are, literally, thrown out with the garbage.” (Deutsche Welle (22 April 2014) *Illegitimate newborns murdered and discarded*)

This report also states:

“Razia Zulfikar, a nurse working at a maternity home in the central Pakistani city of Gujranwala, says hundreds of illegitimate newborn babies are killed in

the Islamic republic every day. 'An eight-month pregnant girl came to us just a few days ago. We didn't want to admit her to our hospital. After repeated requests from her family, we finally agreed to treat her. But we told the family explicitly that we would not kill the child,' Zulfikar told DW. 'We gave the baby to the girl's family. Only she and her family know what they did to the newborn, and how they killed him,' she added." (ibid)

A report from Al Jazeera states:

"But Kazmi says money is only one reason for the country's high infanticide rate. 'Many more are killed because they are born out of wedlock,' he says. In Pakistan's socially conservative society, illegitimate children are referred to as 'harami,' an Arabic word that means 'forbidden under Islam' — an admission, Kazmi says, that the parents have sinned." (Al Jazeera (14 January 2014) *Infanticide is on the rise in Pakistan*)

In a paper presented at the International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities the author Aasia Khatoon Khattak states:

"The increasing reason for female infanticide is the illegitimate birth of a child. Being an Islamic society, Pakistani social order regards the illegitimate children as 'Harami'— an Arabic word meaning, 'illicit' or 'prohibited by Islam'. Also marginally used as an abusive term, the word 'Harami' labels illegitimate children as well as the parents with disrespect and makes it impossible for them to lead a dignified life in the society. Thus, people who actually want to hide their sin and keep respect in the society kill their children born out of wedlock or because of sexual violence." (Khattak, Aasia Khatoon (10 September 2014) *Female Infanticide and Killing Women for Giving Birth to a Baby Girl – A Case Study Of Pakistan*, Proceedings of SOCIOINT14- International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities, p.324)

An article published in Foreign Affairs magazine states:

"Children born out of wedlock are also abandoned...Children born out of wedlock are often referred to as *najaiz*, meaning illegitimate. To prevent these babies from being killed, some *jhulas* around the city are posted with signs that say 'To hide one sin do not commit another one.'" (Foreign Affairs (29 May 2016) *Ending Infanticide in Pakistan*)

An article from the Pakistan Observer states:

"Frequent news about illegal pregnancies, abortions, dumping babies in gutters, dumpsters and killing of hundreds of illegitimate newborn babies is always intensely painful and tormenting for very sensible and sensitive ones in our Islamic republic. In Pakistan, abortion, infanticide is illegal and so is adultery, even then we hear about cases of children born out of wedlock and then are killed clandestinely due to the stigma of illegitimacy. Premarital relations are strictly prohibited in country and are frowned upon by society and that is the reason there is probably no bigger taboo than having a child out of wedlock. According to Islamic point of view infanticide is a punishable crime and Islamic laws award very severe punishment. However, despite such punishments and social taboos people are still involved in extramarital relationship and ultimately they commit a hideous crime of infanticide." (Pakistan Observer (26 September 2016) *Curse of infanticide*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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