

IN YOUR WORDS

by Beenish Ahmad

Karo Kari is the kind of honor killing practiced in the Sindh. Though the major objective behind the act of karo kari is to punish a woman and a man involved in any kind of illegal relationship, however, the people have been misusing it for decades. The reasons behind this misuse are that the men either use this law to kill their sisters and daughters in order to shun their right in the properties or to kill an enemy by accusing him as an exploiter of the honor. The latest case of karo kari to hit the headlines, is that of Shaista Almani, who married a man Balakh Sher from the rival Balakh tribe. The tribals made Balakh Sher divorce Shaista by force, due to which Shaista took refuge in an NGO that later on, interested her to the local police station keeping in view the security risk. The police filed a case against the Almani chieftains for making attempts to kill Shaista Almani. Media brought the case into limelight that ensured her security to some extent. As media gave extra mileage to this case, the government bodies and political parties also came into action to help this helpless woman. Shaista's special interviews are published and broadcast in newspapers and on TV channels. In this regard, The Nation has endeavored to conduct a survey among the

general masses to get their opinion in this case.

Rabia Khan, a student, says, "I watched her interview on TV in which she said that she didn't want to go back to her homeland because of the fear of insecurity. I perceive it in another angle. Though the Sardar of the tribe says that the jirga has not decided to kari her but she is still afraid

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Rabia Khan



Abdul Sami

to go back. The reason can be that she has violated those traditions of her tribe that people have been following for centuries. The people in the civilized society of Karachi, people take her as a pitiful person but back in her native soil it is not like that. Now even if the chieftains claim to be flexible in their rules but the local people won't forgive her...not now that she has brought a "bad name" to their honor by bringing this issue to the media. They take her as a traitor, who has demolished their social values."

About the Shaista Almani case turning political, Awais Yousaf Zai says, "it is natural...when the media projects an issue to such a degree, every political person or government body would try to be a part of it to get into limelight for the sake of appreciation."

Abdul Sami describes the court marriage a meaningless action, "when the parents of both Shaista and Balakh Sher were agreed on this proposal then there was no question of court marriage. The only person creating problems was

Is Shaista afraid of her father-in-law?

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the tribal chief, they could wait for a while. They could convince him since he was also related to Shaista's family."

About Shaista's plea to government to provide her safety, Syeda Nafeesa Bano said that at present when the security of our President and ministers is at the verge of high risk, how could the government provide or claim to provide her security? "The thing is that whether her security is more important than that of our President, who's been attacked twice in a week last month."

Mansoor Razaq while expressing his views said, "The real villain in this case is neither the system nor the tribal chiefs. I'm of the view that when Balakh Sher made this girl elope with him then no matter what came his way, he should have remained committed and loyal to her. Now that he has divorced her he has left no door opened via, which she could return back."

Faiza Mushtaq while discussing the custom of karo kari said that if the NGOs and government bodies are of the view that harsh criticism would make people of these tribal areas change their norms, then it is like building castles in the air. They would never turn away from the traditions of their forefathers. However, proper planning can bring about a change. The



Shaista Almani

education system of such backward areas should be improved that might help people judge things logically.

Farhan Sheikh, a lawyer by profession, while talking about the legal aspects of the divorce in Shaista Almani case said that according to the 1975 family laws a divorce case cannot be finalized before three months' duration. In these three months the counsellors of both sides arrange meetings in order to solve the

conflict to avoid divorce. Once the attempts of arbitration fail, after that the divorce case proceeds in a proper manner. Commenting on the action taken by the government of appointing Shaista Almani as an ASI in Sindh Police, Sadaf Ameen said, "It is an ingenious decision by the government. By offering Shaista a job in police the government has fulfilled her requests of providing her a job, a safe haven to live in and security on the top of all." ■



Mansoor Razaq