**Silence is Consent!**

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I was sitting at the top stage of the ruins of Corfe Castle recently, surrounded by the mountains and valleys of the English county of Dorset. These dramatic medieval ruins stand on a natural hill soaring above the Corfe village prompted me a sea of hundreds of faces whose lives were ruined after falling apart into the catalogue of victims of rape, abduction, forced marriage and conversion. And there is no excuse, what happens in Pakistan does not stay in Pakistan. However, it seems our government has failed to fix the country, while the tributaries of, rape, sexual harassment and honour killing have made basic human rights an uphill battle for women in Pakistan today. Whether it’s equal rights of minorities or women in Pakistan, our dreams are moving further out of reach every year.

Walking alone through the ruins of Castle, I felt liberated to pen the heart-breaking irony of women’s rights that has travelled across Pakistan and indeed at my doorstep. The history of the maltreatment of women in Pakistan is one long identity crisis: the predators of such vicious crimes appearing on the cover of every newspaper in the land are free at large from the government and its justice system.

Take a good look at the cultural madness of our system that runs on the racist belief that women are somehow less privileged than males – and therefore, many women don’t ever belong to the ounce of the sense of belonging in Pakistan. Nevertheless, this failure has groomed the culture so that it becomes hard even to recognise its harms and bruises. Similarly, a cynical slice of our society has brought out in Pakistan the same imperial arrogance that doomed Pakistan’s dream of an enlightened and progressive nation. Well, that’s not a happy story.

If we don’t help rebuild minorities’ communities after a “trust deficit,” we end up with a spectacular mess as a majority community.

These days, incidents of forced conversion and violence against women is everyday life in Pakistan but in this battle, the most damaged are those who are left alone when state institutions desecrated the most sacred principle of parenthood, guardianship, and acceptance. Failure to do so often implants a ticking time bomb in victims that may detonate in later life, in the form of emotional breakdown or post-traumatic stress relief disorder (PTSD).

Sadly, silence remains a necessary survival strategy of a victim to pay the price for the government’s “negligence” habit. These strange times have made us experts in pain, loss, trauma, and loneliness.

The emerging, mistaken notions of our system are jam-packed with the flippant hearts and medieval taboos are already visible to make story horror. Particularly, the social class who intends to excavate reasons to justify rape or forced conversion, cannibalise my brain box and moral compass which often says to each other “My dear, it’s so unnecessary.”

In the seemingly endless battle to deny the reality of forced conversion and marriages of minority’s girls, Pakistani lawmakers around the country have repurposed silence to add the cruel effect. This nonsense has flooded the daily crimes of sexual harassment against the multitude of women in Pakistan. There is a laundry list of reasons for this. Not only is Pakistan still in the grip of the lack of safety for women, but the government has also chosen to remain silent over the growing number of the forced conversion, and discrimination against minority women.

Let me remind you, we are a country that could not keep up the Jinnah’s vision for equal rights, privileges, and obligations; could not stop violence towards minorities; could not win a war against vast racial and gender disparities, retrograde enemy; cannot conquer a disease of corruption and bad governance, and cannot bring itself to trust the government. The news media, rule of law, and law enforcement are meant to operate for the common good. Aren’t we beautiful humans ourselves simply because of our faults?

Pakistan, meanwhile, has experienced many failures, with enough price but more strategic consequences, in our recent efforts to radicalise our society. As a result, it is impossible to know the surge in forced conversion and sexual violence against women but surely is due to escalating religious extremism and is down to the willingness of authorities to man up for help.

Excavating the government frameworks to counter this dark reality of women rights through revised school curriculums, legislative reforms and the will of the government is almost impossible. But it is badly needed, and not just to dispel the motives behind rape, abduction and forced conversion but also to hold perpetrators accountable and urge the government to stand true to their promises.

Fundamentally, the present state of women rights, with the ostensible triviality of our system has endangered serious structural barriers, vast racial wars, and stigmas against women which essentially impacts the body and soul. I find myself in deep shock over the culture of victim-blaming which is built intensely flawed. How it is executed is a national shame and the timing of such made-up assumptions is catastrophic.

Accepting the grim situation of women rights in Pakistan is not just the failure of the national women strategy but a wider failure of our overall strategy, particularly in tackling the forced conversion of minorities’ girls that gave rise to the attacks of sexual harassment, rape, and abuse of women across Pakistan. And if we don’t help rebuild minorities’ communities after a “trust deficit,” then we end up with a spectacular mess as a majority community.

My mother once said; we have locked our eyes to see the everyday reality of women violence which men cannot pay off with their bones and flesh. She prays, bless the broken road with an appeal to love yesterday, today, and forever. Dear government, make sure to speak your mind when you disagree with something because, for many people, silence is consent.

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