[**Very angry men**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1642520/very-angry-men)

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PAKISTANI women have seen everything in these arduous, long and bloody weeks. Women have been killed by husbands, killed by their in-laws, killed for existing, killed for refusing to do the bidding of some feral and entitled man.

The living have had their own share of tribulations: maimed and harassed, made subject to the fury of mobs in real life, made subject to the fury of mobs online. Existing anywhere where there are men, and that is everywhere in Pakistan, has been laden with risk for women. Some angry man somewhere is always waiting to pounce, to harm and to hurt. Even dead women are not spared, forced to die second and third and fourth deaths at the hands of men who are convinced that it is never ever their fault.

Sometimes, online, women are able to find a small corner that has not yet been invaded by men. In one such conversation, young women gathered to speak about the ferocity of the recent spate of violence. All were astounded at the particular quality of recent attacks on women. Women have been butchered, mentally and physically and emotionally, for a terribly long time in Pakistan. Yet it is also true that the recent episodes of killing after killing — the [public manhandling](https://www.dawn.com/news/1641195) of a female social media personality, the [beheading](https://www.dawn.com/news/1636397/suspect-booked-on-premeditated-murder-charges-in-killing-of-ex-diplomats-daughter) of a beautiful young girl — all have an anger, a vile and pestilent quality that is not the norm. This is not death and suffering handed out, it is death and suffering handed out with relish, with a certain joy and elation that is utterly grotesque.

All men do not kill or abuse, but a large number of them can be seen supporting those who attack and abuse women. They pour into chatrooms and clubhouse sessions, on Instagram and on Twitter, ready to ‘kill’ the victims twice and three times. They point out the many ways in which it is the woman’s fault, the clothes, the actions, the failure to foresee the crimes that await them. Their message seems to be the same in every case: if you make a mistake, try to question the rules men have made, then you deserve to ‘die’ many times over.

The government needs to take special notice of the current avalanche of violence against women.

It seems that men have the right to be what they are, who they are. Many of them roam the parks, the streets or, sit on sofas inside homes, teaching courses. It is their world and women can exist only at their whim and fancy and only if they acquiesce to grovel before their male masters.

Men in this country, then, appear to be in the grip of the same misogynist fever that has taken over the rest of the world.

The [Delhi rapists](https://www.dawn.com/news/1042043) were angry at a certain kind of woman, a woman who dared to enjoy herself in a public space, a woman who was not appropriately apologetic, a woman who dared to be present without being sorry. Their anger was of the same source as, say, the anger of white supremacists in the United States who worry that every immigrant, every non-white person, is present for their replacement.

The possibility that white privilege may not grant them that to which they have been accustomed, that the world may not be structured around this village, is a prospect of doom, an end to all things that are good. Those who are not white and have had to inhabit a white world know what this is.

**Read:** [*The roots of misogyny*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1265178)

Male privilege has the same logic of hatred. The idea is that women are lesser humans, deserving at best the scraps and rubbish that men have decided they no longer want. The nature of male privilege is such that not only does it wield power, it also is convinced that those subjugated enjoy the rotten morsels that have been tossed to them. Men, including in this country, not only force women to live limited lives, they imagine that they love those lives and would want nothing better. Women are expected to become the tame birds that do not fly away even when the door to the cage is opened. Many become those birds; they sing all day about the happiness they have found in their cages, they wonder why other birds refuse to be content in the constrained spaces allotted to them.

Male anger of this moment is at those birds, the ones looking for the spaces, the pauses, the possibilities through which they could be free. When the Delhi rapists found such a woman, they made her into an example. The maintenance of male privilege requires that those who encroach on it must be dealt with swiftly and deftly. So the beautiful girl is beheaded, the wife has her [head smashed](https://www.dawn.com/news/1635527/landowner-held-after-murder-of-wife) in, the social media star is grabbed and assaulted. These are all lessons that are meant to intimidate the women who are left behind, who may have considered the possibility of freedom of a world that is not so completely defined by male privilege.

In Pakistan, the government needs to take special notice of the current avalanche of violence. The misogynistic and mediaeval Afghan Taliban, who quite insistently wish to banish women altogether, have set themselves up next door. Pakistani men must not be permitted to nurse the delusion that they, too, can soon establish a similar system that misuses faith to banish women from public spaces and monitor their every move everywhere else so that they know that they are lesser humans. It is a fearful moment, this, and if the government cares about women at all, it would do well to announce that the climate of fear is not some first step before women are shut away because of concerns about their own safety.

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