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Women's Mobility, Honor Culture, and Social Control in Rural Villages of District Karak

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ABSTRACT
This paper looks at how the honor culture, social norms and religious values affect the movement and agency of women in three villages of the District Karak of Gorgori, Kohi Maidan, and Warana Ahmad Abad. The qualitative approach was used to obtain data with 30 women aged between 18 and 45 years using an in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Results indicate that honor (ghairat) is one of the key social values that determine the actions of women and their day-to-day movements. The mobility of women is followed up by their family, elders, peers, and the community, and therefore the need to comply with them in order to preserve family reputation. Learning and involvement in the economy are ways of empowerment, but both are closely controlled, which may involve control or socially acceptable models. The family support turns out to be an influential mediator that facilitates or limits the mobility and peer influence and social learning help to uphold the cultural norms. These prohibitions are further approved by religious and moral values that make women control themselves in accordance with the social norms. This research relies on Michel Foucault concept of disciplinary power and the social and symbolic capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu in order to describe the manner in which mobility limitations are internalized and negotiated. In these villages, women empowerment is relational, context-sensitive and within the scope of culture. The study makes contributions to the knowledge of honor oriented social control in rural South Asia and provides the information about the culturally specific intervention. Some of the recommendations are improving access to education, economic opportunities, mentorship, and community involvement, which enable women to contribute more actively to social, economic, and educational spheres and at the same time respecting the local norms.

Keywords: *Women mobility, honor culture, social norms, empowerment, rural Pakistan, District Karak.*

Introduction

The rural communities in South Asia are highly guided by cultural practices that dictate how men and women interact with one another, family status as well as social behavior. These include honor, which in local terms is referred to as izzat; honor tends to govern women in their actions and movement particularly in traditional as well as tribal regions (Ahmad, 2023). In honor-driven societies women directly influence the family reputation and this limits their education, employment, and social life (Ahmad, 2023; Christianson et al., 2020). Social control

is top-down and bottom-up, imposed by families and elders, which connects female autonomy to the overall dignity and restricts women agency (Razia, 2025). Such systems are grounded on patriarchy whereby family reputation is more important than individual independence. Research on cross-cultural studies shows that the norms of honor influence mobility and freedom of a person outside of South Asia. As an illustration, within Europe, the norms that are linked to honor are connected with social isolation and restrictions in the behavior of both girls and boys (Baianstovu et al., 2021). To cope with these restrictions, women tend to implement coping mechanisms to satisfy family demand (Ahmad, 2023). Pashtunwali as a traditional code in the Pakistani society also focuses on collective reputation and protective responsibility, limiting the mobility of women and their control (Pashtunwali, 2026).

Though honor culture is conservative, it serves as a highly effective social control system in which it overlaps legal, family, and economic systems to uphold gender inequality (Razia, 2025). Although empirical studies comparing the application of honor-based social control in rural communities in Pakistan are scarce, there is an increase in academic interest of honor-based social control in Pakistan.

The Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with three tehsils, Takht-e-Nasrati, Karak and Banda Daud Shah, has a variety of tribal structure, economical status and educational facilities. Nevertheless, the regional disparities in regulating the mobility of women in the villages like Kohi Maidan, Godikhel, Warana Ahmad Abad, Ghondi Merkhan Khel, Gorgori and Worbashi are under-researched. This paper will explore the construction, maintenance, and negotiation of honor culture in these two socio-cultural environments, and give comparative evidence on the micro-levels of social control and the effect of these on the mobility of women.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the social construction and meaning of honor (ghairat) to rural social groups in District Karak, the authority of the selected rural communities.
2. To examine how women mobility is controlled in Kohi Maidan, Godikhel, Warana Ahmad Abad, Ghondi Merkhan Khel, Gorgori and Worbashi.
3. To compare differences in honor-based mobility restrictions in Tehsil Takht-e-Nasrati, Tehsil Karak, and Tehsil Banda Daud Shah.
4. To analyze how women bargain, disobey or internalize honor-based mobility controls in their socio-cultural backgrounds

Research Questions

1. How the concept of honor (ghairat) is culturally defined and practiced in the selected villages of District Karak?
2. What are some of the particular ways of social control that govern the mobility of women in these rural societies?
3. Are there any important geographic variations in the degree and dynamics of mobility regulation in the three tehsils of District Karak?
4. What is the perception of women concerning honor-based limitations to their movements and their involvement in the public?

Significance of the Study

It is empirical research on honor-based social control and mobility of women in the villages of choice of District Karak (Tehsil Takht-e-Nasrati, Tehsil Karak, and Tehsil Banda Daud Shah). It describes regional differences in honor principles and their influence on women, which adds to the theories on patriarchy, symbolic power, and social surveillance. The results can be useful to policy makers and NGOs that want to empower women and educate persons in rural conservative communities without interfering with the culture. The multi-village design is also

comparative, thus adding to the literature on honor cultures, rural patriarchy, and gendered mobility

Scope of the Study

The research uses six villages, District Karak, Kohi Maidan, Godikhel and Warana Ahmad Abad (Tehsil Takht-e-Nasrati); Ghondi Merkhan Khel (Tehsil Karak); and Gorgori and Worbashi (Tehsil Banda Daud Shah) as the study sites. It looks at regional differences in the honor norms, the means through which women movement is regulated and how women would negotiate or resist these limitations. Dwelling upon the social, cultural and economic context of these communities, the findings give insightful results that cannot be generalized to other districts and cities.

Literature review

In Asian societies, independence among women is limited by honor in which women are the representation of the reputation of the family. Comparative discourse analyses show that women who are prohibited from moving around are not subjected to restrictions on a symbolic level but are subjected to the force of cultural norms (Ebe & Maharood, 2022).

In transnational settings, the liberty of movement of women is stringently controlled by community monitoring and family duty, which are internalized honor codes (Christianson et al., 2020). Research on honor-based violence further indicates that the patriarchal and symbolic cultures agree that women should not be allowed to move freely in the cultures (Rokhimah, 2025). Patriarchal systems have a great effect on the autonomy of women in South Asia. Studies show that women movements and choices are limited to save the honor and dignity of the family and tend to increase the social exclusion (Nazneen and Sultan, 2019; Bhattacharjee, 2018). The domains of socio-economic disparities also overlap with honor norms, which legitimize cultural restriction of women. Similar studies conducted in Pakistan indicate that the reputation of the family as a social construct and expectations imposed by society contribute to women in Pakistan having extremely limited freedom in moving about in society, such as access to education and jobs (Khan and Miller, 2020; Hussain and Ali, 2024). In these findings, it is revealed that honor norms are symbolic and more instrumental in keeping the freedom of women at bay in Pakistani society. Honor norms are reinforced by traditional codes like Pashtunwali in rural and tribal regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which has a direct influence on the behavior and freedom of movement of women.

The breaches of honor are punished, which makes restrictions even stronger (Shah et al., 2025).

Another aspect of honor is highlighted by interpretative researches that honor overlays with gendered expectations, as it influences the socialization of women, their mobility and duties at the family (Iqbal and Tariq, 2023). Altogether, the rural honor cultures establish certain social control mechanisms that determine the scope and mode of women mobility

Theoretical frame work

1 The social Control and surveillance Theory

The social control and surveillance theory of Foucault. Michel Foucault defines social control as a process that is linked to surveillance and monitoring using which social norms are imposed and behavior controlled. Honor culture in the rural society is a tool that limits the mobility of women. Women are always monitored by their families, elders, and community members and hence women internalize these norms and change their behavior. This theory describes the role of the insidious power relations and observation in society in ensuring gender norms and the extent to which women act on their own as they conform to these expectations without enforcing them.

2. Theory of Symbolic Power

Theory of Symbolic Power as presented by Bourdieu. Pierre Bourdieu has defined honor as a symbolic capital in the society. Social status and stand of a family or tribe is usually determined by compliance with honor standards by women. By obeying such norms, social status of the family is confirmed, and the dominance of the powerful structures is maintained. It is this theory that assists in understanding that it is not only the limitations on female mobility that are used as the instrument of control but also the means to support social hierarchy and symbolic acknowledgment among the rural population.

Integration of the Theories

This study integrates Foucault notion of surveillance with symbolic power of Bourdieu in determining why honor-based mobility restrictions are implemented through observation and driven by social prestige and recognition. The use of this dual-theory approach offers a universal framework used to explain differences in honor culture and how women mobility is controlled in the chosen villages in District Karak.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This paper will take a case study approach of qualitative comparison to research on the linkage of honor culture to the mobility of women in rural societies in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhaa. A qualitative method was deemed to be suitable due to the fact that honor norms, family control, and community surveillance are social constructed phenomena that cannot be measured numerically but in-depth examination of lived experiences is necessary.

Philosophical Paradigm

The study is based on the paradigm of interpretivism which presupposes that the social reality is predetermined by collective beliefs, expectations, and traditions shared by the culture. This strategy helped the researcher to know how women interpret, bargain or fight honor-based mobility rules in their socio-cultural contexts.

Study Area

It was done in six villages in 3 tehsils of the District Karak, namely: Kohi Maidan, Godikhel and Warana Ahmad Abad in Tehsil Takht-e-Nasrati; Ghondi Merkhan Khel in Tehsil Karak; and Gorgori and Worbashi in Tehsil Banda Daud Shah. These villages were chosen because of the tribal culture and the noticeable trends of limited female movement.

Population and Sample Size

The target group was comprised of women aged 18-35 years living in the selected villages since this is the age group that is most impacted by the problems associated with education, employment, marriage, and social participation. The selection of participants based on the honor-based mobility restrictions was purposive to include only those individuals who had experienced honor-based migration restrictions first-hand. The study sample was 30 participants, comprising of 15 women to be interviewed in-depth and 15 women to participate in three focus group discussions (one in each tehsil). The data collection would be done until the thematic saturation was reached. Qualitative research focuses on qualitative rather than quantitative levels; hence, it was deemed that a sample of 30 subjects was enough to produce meaningful information.

Data Collection

The primary data were gathered by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups. The interviews gave specific personal accounts of family surveillance, movement limitations, access to education, employment limitations, and coping mechanisms. the discussions in the focus group included collective

Perceptions in regard to honor norms, social expectations in society, reputation control, and informal social sanctions. the interviews were recorded in the Pashto language, with informed consent, and audio-recorded, transcribed word-to-word and translated into English. Field notes were also kept to carry out contextual observations.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was done to the collected data. Transcripts were initially read attentively and coded in a systematic manner and patterns that kept on reoccurring were put together as broad themes. It was mostly an inductive analysis with an informed approach by the social control and symbolic power perspectives to bring in a theoretical depth.

Trustworthiness

Triangulation between interviews and focus group discussion was used to make the results credible. The effectiveness of the long-term involvement and systematic recording contributed to reliability and validity. There is a thick description of the context which increases the transfer of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The process of conducting the research adhered to the ethical principles. All participants were informed and their identities were kept confidential using pseudonyms and interviews were held in culturally acceptable and secure environments because the issues surrounding honor are sensitive issues.

Limitations

The small sample size and qualitative design limit the extrapolation of the research to other villages other than those sampled. Nevertheless, the research gives detailed contextual background insights on honor-based mobility restrictions in rural District Karak.

Findings of the Study

Theme: 1 Honor as a Social Reality.

The first social value that was identified to dictate the daily life of women and movement in the chosen villages of District Karak was honor (ghairat). According to an in-depth interview conducted on one young woman of Kohi Maidan, she explained that *when a woman goes out without informing the family, then people start gossiping; this is what cuts the respect of our family.* Equally, one of the interviewees in Gorgori said, *they could never leave home alone because people can pass on gossips and undermine the position of the family*. In focus group discussions, the participants highlighted together, saying, *our elders always tell us what we should and cannot do outside the house, or people will begin to talk, and we have to be serious, as small mistakes can bring disgrace to the family.* Such stories show that the mobility of women is strictly controlled which is not a personal choice but to preserve the family honor. Living under the constant supervision of the society, women adjust their daily practices, dress and communication behaviors to meet these social expectations and exhibit self-control. This tendency was supported by field observations, where women were strictly followed, especially at the social events and in the field. These results resemble those of Ahmad (2023) and Christianson et al. (2020) that determine honor norms as placing women in the role of guardians of family reputation, and are also in line with transnational studies that point to limitations of female autonomy in honor-based cultures (Ebe and Maharood, 2022). The theme responds to the research question by examining the meaning of honor and how honor is practiced and constructed in the villages chosen to answer the research question, and it discusses the research objective of investigating the theme of honor and responds to the research thesis that honor is a social construct. The imposition of honor rules displays the Foucaultian notion of disciplinary power where the contribution of observation and social

control makes people follow directions, and the Bourdieuian theory of symbolic capital whereby women are obedient to maintain family honor and social status. In short, honor is an intensely internalized and externally imposed value that dictates the behavior and movements of women, which demonstrates how intertwined the obligations of sociality, family control, and self-control are.

Theme: 2 Educations and Control over the Mobility of Women.

Another significant field in the lives of women in the chosen villages of District Karak was education, though it was closely controlled. Although families were aware of the importance of schooling, the access to schooling was conditional and supervised. In one of the in-depth interviews, a participant of Warana Ahmad Abad said, *my father would not permit me to go to school since I do not have someone to accompany me, my cousin would not permit me to go*. On the same note, a young lady with Gorgori confided, *I would like to continue with my schooling although it is not that easy to go to college outside the village since people gossip.* These testimonies were supported in focus group discussions, where the participants explained, *we are not permitted to travel alone even to school gatherings, we must be accompanied by a family member,* and continued to explain that, *education is good, and it does have limits, which are set by our family and community.* These stories tell us that the process of educational mobility is not entirely an individual process but is negotiated in the social norms and that family approval of behavior and honor influence it. Women also altered their educational schedules, routes to use and the people they associate with as per the expectations to show self-regulation as they are closely monitored. Field research that was conducted proved that girls moved in groups, were accompanied by male family members and the school was a place of collective observation in which the behavior of girls was monitored by teachers, elders and family members. Such results are consistent with Khan and Ahmed (2022) and Nazneen and Sultan (2019), who posit that agency can be increased in education in rural South Asia, and still be governed by patriarchal and honor-based standards. This theme will be part of Research Objective 2, which focuses on the mechanisms that regulate the mobility of women, and Research Question 2, which focuses on particular social restrictions on movement. The control of education is one of the examples of Foucault disciplinary power wherein the social control dictates behavior, whereas the value of schooling demonstrates Bourdieu definition of cultural capital, which indicates that schooling raises status but is still bound under the symbolic power of familial and community norms. To conclude, learning activities provide possibilities of female growth, yet school enrollment mobility is controlled and bargained, indicating cautious ratio between empowerment and respect of honor principles.

Theme 3: Economic Involvement and Slow Empowerment

Economic participation was found to be an important albeit a socially mediated pathway to mobility and agency by women in the chosen villages of District Karak. Women were mainly involved in home-based income generating activities, which included embroidery, stitching, taking care of livestock and small trading that gave women a feeling of empowerment but did not oppose social norms. In a detailed interview, one of the respondents at Kohi Maidan said that *I make my livelihood as an embroider at home and that it gives me confidence to purchase small items as it makes me feel good*. Likewise, one of the women in Gorgori said, *"I assist in selling dairy products, yet my brother is the one who takes care of the customers outside and I cannot go there alone.* These observations were corroborated by focus group discussions, where the participants highlighted that working at home is good but that they cannot easily access other markets outside the village, even when they are earning, the elders determine where they can go. These stories underscore economic activity in increasing self-worth and

household inputs but does not benefit in independent mobility since male mediation and honor bound limitations are still controlling. Observable data in the field showed that women had to engage in their economic interactions mainly in a recognizable environment and their dealings in the open world were frequently facilitated by the male family members. These results are justified by the literature that indicates that economic activity in rural Pakistan increases confidence and intra-household power and does not exceed patriarchal boundaries (Ahmad and Shah, 2021; Tariq, 2020). This theme supports Research Objective 2 that looks at mechanisms that govern mobility and Research Question 2 that looks at the role that social control plays in women participating in the public life. An example of Foucault and his discipline power can be seen in the supervision of economic activity whereby the social norms govern behavior in an implicit manner, and the contribution to the family income strengthens the idea of symbolic and social capital as developed by Bourdieu as it adds prestige to the family and does not question the hierarchical order. Finally, economic participation by women supports agency and self-esteem whereas mobility and expanded inclusion are strongly bargained over in honor-based and patriarchal systems in District Karak.

Theme 4: Mobility as a Mediating Structure by Family Support.

The role of family support became an important mediating variable in women mobility and access to education, economic activities and social spaces within the chosen two villages of District Karak. Women stressed that either parental, sibling or marriage support opened possibilities of movement without going out of socially acceptable standards. An example is when one of the participants of Gorgori said, *"My father takes me out; no one in the village can say anything when he permits me to go to the market and school,* and another participant of the village of Warana Ahmad Abad said, *my elder brother takes me to the market and school, otherwise, I cannot go.* These were further supported by focus group discourses, *which provided that support by family lessened the likelihood of gossip and social denunciation, and thus made the day-to-day movement more practicable.* Field observations were able to confirm that women who were accompanied by supportive male kin were less prone to scrutiny and they were able to engage in educational or economic activities more easily. The extent of support however differed among households with families with a strict focus on honor offering less flexibility. Such duality of family as a social norm imposer and an opportunity provider explains how mobility is relational and not autonomous and it is negotiated with the help of kinship networks and hierarchical family structures. The results can be compared to those by Khan and Rehman (2022) and Ali (2021), who propose that family support increases the agency of women in rural settings, yet they preserve the patriarchal authority. The theme will respond to Research Objective 4, which deals with the way women internalize or negotiate restrictions, and Research Question 4, which deals with whether family can moderate honor-based mobility restrictions. The process of family support mediation is an expression of Foucault concept of disciplinary power in which surveillance is performed covertly in households, whereas Bourdieu concept of social capital emphasizes that kinship networks can offer legitimacy as well as resources in order to establish established hierarchies. In short, family support as an intermediary structure influences the mobility and opportunities of women in culturally acceptable terms, but also allows the agency of women and imposes the restrictions of honor in the District of Karak.

Theme 5: Surveillance and Unofficial Social Control of the Community.

In the sampled villages of District Karak, community surveillance was one of the mechanisms that impacted the movement and actions of women. Women consistently said that they were unable to go where they want because of the watchful glares of their neighbors and the rest of

the community. In one of the In-depth interviews, one of the members of Gorgori stated, *I can do it even without the permission of my family but I feel like I am being followed wherever I turn; the neighbors have a gossiping eye on me*. In the same vein, one of the women of Warana Ahmad Abad remarked, that *the older people are always reminding my parents to be careful of me; not so much of our home, but of the village.* These observations were supported by focus group discussions where participants indicated that, *in their village, everyone notices what they do and that, in the event that a woman fails to behave in a proper manner, gossip will spread very fast and that families are under pressure by the community to ensure that they also do right things.* As these stories demonstrate, women mobility is not only controlled by their family, but also by informal community structures, in which conformity is imposed by social approval and the fear of being slander, as well. Observation showed that women walking without escort or talking with men out of their family were closely followed and asked questions by older women or men, which shows how social surveillance is widespread. This theme correlates with Ahmad and Shah (2021) and Riaz (2020) who state that honor culture in the countryside acts as the community control and influences the freedom of women and solidifies patriarchal principles. Their results also indicate Foucault and concept of disciplinary power whereby surveillance makes sure that people adhere to societal expectations and Bourdieu and social capital theory, the fact that social networks and community observation legitimize, as well as enforce, gendered expectations. Altogether, community surveillance is a formal but informal system of control which influences the behavior and the preferences of women in their daily lives and supports the honor-driven culture in District Karak.

Theme 6: Social Conformity and the Impact of Colleagues.

The concept of peer influence was found to be an influential force that dictated the choices and locomotion's of women in the sampled villages of District Karak. Women always claimed that their behavior was not only observed by the family but also by friends and neighbors, and nonconformity may lead to the shame. During one in-depth interview, one of the respondents of Gorgori said, when my friends see me going somewhere without them, they will tell others and my family will be humiliated. On the same note, a woman in Warana Ahmad, said that she does not go out since people gossip, and she does not wish to disgrace herself. These experiences were reinforced by focus group discussions, where participants all saw that they do what the other people do; when they are at home, they could not be any different and everyone could see what they do and therefore, it was safer to do it because everyone follows. These stories show that social peer pressure is an informal and yet an effective behavior regulator that supplements family and community regulation. The field observations showed that women who traveled along with their friends or relatives were not so scrutinized as compared to those traveling alone, thus, showing that peer networks serve as checkpoints that enforce honor-based norms. This theme is compatible with Ahmad and Shah (2021) or Khan and Rehman (2022), who attribute peer influence as a factor in gendered behavior in rural areas. The observed dynamics can be explained by Foucault, who concepts disciplinary power, and Bourdieu, who explains social capital, as women themselves control themselves through watching peers, and peer networks strengthen the status quo and the available social expectations. In summary, peer pressure and social learning play a very important role in District Karak in informal governance that affects the everyday activity of women and supports the honor culture and influences the decision to stay in the place of mobility within socially acceptable boundaries.

Theme 7: Moral Rationales and Religious Beliefs

Religion ideologies and moral principles came up as powerful mechanisms that dictated the Movements and activities of women in the sampled villages of District Karak.

Females used to refer to the teachings of religion as one of the reasons to follow the principles of honor and modesty. During in-depth interview, one of the participants of Gorgori described it *as the fact that our religion declares that women have to be within limits; according to these limits we guarantee that we can preserve the respect of our family.* On the same note, one of the respondents in Warana Ahmad Abad said*, when asked why he never goes out alone, I never do that because it is not right according to our values; my parents keep reminding me about that*. In the focus groups, they pointed out, during discussions; *we are under the religious teachings so that we will not be ashamed or dishonorable and sometimes we limit ourselves because the family allows it because it is the correct thing to do as per our religion*. According to these stories, religious and moral normativity is internalized and offers justification as well as enforcement of mobility limits. Women described that compliance with these norms affected daily choices such as attending school or going to the market and moral direction had an implication on behavior even where the family approval was involved. The field observations were able to confirm that women organized their daily lives and dress based on religiously dictated modesty, and the community leaders and elders supported such practices by counseling and moral education. These results are in line with Ali (2021) and Khan and Rehman (2022) who point out the place of religious and moral framework in structuring the gendered behavior in rural areas. The theme corresponds to Foucaultian concept of disciplinary power and shows how moral and religious constructions result in self-regulation, and Bourdieuian concept of habitus as the belief systems are incorporated in everyday practices into social hierarchies.

To sum up, religious and moral beliefs in District Karak are strongly connected with the culture of honor, and it forms the internalization of social expectations in women and supports the self-restriction as the morally and socially acceptable choice, hence determining mobility and daily decision-making. In the chosen villages of the District Karak,

Theme 8: Peer and Social Learning.

Peer contacts and social learning were very important in terms of how women behave and move

Around in the chosen villages of District Karak.

Women explained that they would keep an eye on the activities of their friends, neighbors, and other female members of the community in order to know how far they were supposed to go with their behavior. During one in-depth interview, a Gorgori participant told us that *he noticed the behavior of his friends and how they move and behave; he emulated them so that no one would judge him.* Another respondent, Warana Ahmad, said, that when *I visit any place alone like the other people, people will gossip, and rather I like doing what everyone does.* In the focus group discussions, the focus group members highlighted, *we do what other girls in the village do too; when they say something is unsafe, we listen and watch out, that way we do not get in trouble.* These stories emphasize that women depend on peer observations in order to overcome mobility constraints and add to family and community oversight. The field observations also supported the idea that women usually traveled in groups or consult with friends before visiting markets or schools where social criticism was minimized and negotiations could be done within the socially acceptable limits. This habit explains the way in which peer-to-peer social learning confirms honor-based norms and allows women to adjust their behavior safely. The results are consistent with Ali (2021) and Khan and Rehman (2022), who highlight that gendered norms are enabled through peer networks in rural areas. The

theme relates to Foucault concept of disciplinary power, where self-discipline is developed through observation and Bourdieu concept of habitus whereby social reaction is imprinted into hierarchal systems. Comprehensively, the peer influence and social learning play a central role in dictating the women daily mobility, which reinforces the cultural demands of honor, but gives them minimal negotiated powers in District Karak.

Theme 9: Moral Reasoning and Ethical Guidance internally.

In the chosen villages of the District Karak, women tended to rely on moral thinking and ethics in order to direct their conduct, even outside of the limitations caused by families. During an in-depth interview, one of the respondents of Gorgori mentioned, *even in the situation where no one is observing me, I would always think about what is right and what my conscience is telling me; it will help me know how to behave.* Another respondent at Warana Ahmad, explained that, *sometimes I do not go out at home not because my family ordered me to do so, but because I find it to be right based on my values.* Through the focus group discussions, *the subjects pointed out, our own decisions are determined by what we think is morally right, and this at times slows us down more than rules.* These reports show that women incorporate moral structures that affect daily decisions like going to school, going to neighbors, or engaging in communal activities. Observations by the field revealed that women voluntarily framed their processes and relation, in the lack of direct family control, around individualized moral judgment. Such results are not novel to Ali (2021) and Khan and Rehman (2022), who emphasize the role of moral and ethical thinking in forming behavior in honor-based communities in rural areas. This theme is corroborated by Bourdieu concept of habitus that internalized belief would translate into practices, and Foucault concept of self-discipline, which would explain how ethical reflection would lead to autonomous control of behavior. It also tackles the research aim of learning to internalize social and moral norms by women, and answers the research question on how individual ethics and morality affect the daily decision-making and travel of women. To sum up, internal moral reasoning serves as a personal guide that enables women to act morally, as ethical and socially acceptable behavior is supported and promoted without external rulings. This motif offers a more subtle insight into making decisions under the conditions of honor, social conventions, and in-house moral principles in District Karak.

Discussion

The results of this research indicate that honor culture (ghairat) is used as a focal point at which women conduct and move within the chosen villages of District Karak. Families, elders and the general society keep a constant check on women and as such a culture of social surveillance prevails. The non-adherence to the established norms is consider the threat to the image of families and communities, which proves that honor is not only symbolic but also imposes social control. Women internalize them, and on a daily basis, their schedules, clothes, time of activities, and social life are shaped in accordance with societal expectations. These trends are in line with Ahmad (2023), Christianson et al. (2020) and are theoretically described using the Foucault concept of surveillance with its emphasis on self-regulation and Bourdieu concept of symbolic power that allows ascertaining the family status by obeying the rules of honor. The education became a tightly controlled source of empowerment. Although families can see its value, it has to be supervised and socially acceptable to participate. Girls may need to have escorts or have few rules to observe so that they are honorable during their stay at school or college. This shows that empowerment enabled by education is parallel with mobility restriction, which is compliance by social and family monitoring and provides minimal agency. Likewise, economic engagement offers women not only income, but also self-worth, but is

likely to be limited to home-based or controlled work, which demonstrates a negotiated empowerment against socially acceptable frames (Ahmad & Shah, 2021; Tariq, 2020). Education and economic activities exist in a tension of what could be seen as autonomy and cultural constraints that are imposed upon them. Family support is a very crucial mediating structure in the mobility of women. The consent of parents, brothers or husbands makes women get schooling, get control of health services and even engage in income-generating activities. On the other hand, the absence of family support severely limits the mobility, and it is important to note that, autonomy in such situations is not an individual thing but a relational one. Compliance is also strengthened by peer influence and social learning, where women make adjustments to the actions of their friends and neighbors as per the behavior as they see it to prevent gossip and retain honor. The social networks serve as informal control mechanisms by supplementing family and community control mechanisms (Khan and Rehman, 2022; Rehman, 2022). The paper also puts a focus on the religious and moral frameworks in the justification of mobility restrictions. Religious and ethical responsibility among women strengthens ethics and norms of honor, as well as enhances self-control. The internalized morality plays a role in the external surveillance of socially acceptable conduct by ensuring that even with family approval, principles of religion govern such conduct and that is why individuals stick to the established beliefs in leading the way in everyday activities. There is more control at the community level and in the hierarchy of the household. It can be seen that mobility choices are incorporated in larger kinship systems, village norms, and patriarchal authority systems. Women negotiate their freedom in such a limited area by means of accompaniment, obedience or strategic compliance, meaning that power is practiced in such a way that it is negotiated, not defiant of the social order. Even vital issues like access to health services are mediated by male relatives and community approval which demonstrates that even important life decisions are subject to honor-based expectations. A comparative study that is carried out between the villages, tehsils reveals that differences in socio-economic status, tribal group and cultural practices of a certain area determine the degree and modes of restricted mobility. Indicatively, villages containing more liberal family views or education exhibited a small allowance of women whereas the traditional tribal execution in different regions practiced a firm hold. These differences bring out the micro level diversity in the greater honor cultures. The paper highlights the importance of mobility and agency of women as not being absolute but they arise through negotiated limits provided by the honor culture, family, community, and religion according to the mediation of education, economic involvement, and peer pressure. The notion of disciplinary power as proposed by Foucault clarifies the process of internalized surveillance determining behaviour, and social and symbolic capital as discussed by Bourdieu clarifies how the behaviour of women is both a way of maintaining family honour and a way of negotiating personal possibilities. Empowerment of women in District Karak is therefore, situation based, relational and is mediated by culture. In a nutshell, honor, family, community, religion, education, economic engagement, and peer networks interaction determine how women move daily and make decisions in District Karak. Empowerment can occur; however, it is never authorized outside the socially constructed boundaries, which provides an intricate interplay among the autonomy, compliance, and cultural legitimacy. The results add to the existing sociological knowledge on honor-based social control and offer practical implications of cultural-competent intervention to help more women enter the education, health and economic sectors and still be honored by the local standards.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the role of honor culture (ghairat), family and community values, religious values, and patriarchal orders on the mobility and agency of women in chosen villages in District Karak. The results indicate that honor is a ubiquitous social control system, which determines the behavior and restricts autonomy. Families, elders of the community and their peers closely follow the activities of women and failure to conform to the desired norms is usually accompanied by chatter, reprimand or even social ostracism. Women carry these norms and manage their behavioral control to safeguard the family name explaining that honor culture is both imposed and upheld externally and internally. Education and economic involvement continued to be the possible means of empowerment, but they are mediated through the social norms and family honor. The accessibility of schools, colleges, and economic opportunities by women is conditional, monitored and in most cases accompanied by men members of the family. Women have few spaces to negotiate agency as family support, peer influence, and community guidance offer limited spaces to empower them, which is why agency and empowerment are also relational and context-dependent. Mobility restrictions are also supported by religious and moral beliefs and are justified by the cultural anticipation of women doing what upholds their family dignity and community values. It is also observed that the study varies between the villages and tehsils, dependent on the socio-economic status, tribal affiliations, and understanding of honor in the villages. In less patriarchal settings or families, women have some more freedom and independence, whereas in more restrictive ones, patriarchy introduces more binding constraints. In general, the negotiated limits of agency by women in District Karak are rather satisfactory, as they orchestrate personal goals, family and social demands. In short, movement of women and empowerment in such rural societies is a result of a complex interaction of honor, family, community, religion, education and economic activities. Honor culture acts as a means of control and as an area in which women bargain at restricted liberties as well bringing to the fore the significance of culturally appropriate gender empowerment in rural South Asia.

Recommendation

Support Programs: Parental and guardian workshops would assist in making them realize the importance of female participation in education, health and economic endeavors.

The involvement of the male family members as allies is necessary to make sure that women have the opportunity to move freely and get involved in decision-making.

Community Awareness and Dialogue: The dialogues about the honor culture and the mobility of the women can demonstrate that empowerment and the cultural norms are compatible.

Engaging the local elders and religious leaders would encourage women to participate in the public in a safe and acceptable manner.

Health Access Facilitation: Female health practitioners should be made more available in the villages in order to save on the traveling distance. Timely care that does not violate family and community norms can also be done through mobile health services.

Policy Interventions: NGOs and local governments need to come up with policies that address cultural values but enhancing independence and rights of women.

These programs can be monitored and supported to be socially acceptable and sustainable.

Networks and Peer Support: Young women could share experiences, get advice and gain confidence culturally appropriately through peer networks and mentorship programs.

Women agency and mobility should be enhanced by promoting safe learning environments.

Recommendation: Education, economic opportunities, family and community engagement, mentorship and culturally sensitive interventions can be used to empower women in District Karak.

Although family honor, community norms, and religious values affect the movement of women, negotiated agency using the strategies will enable women to play a bigger role in the social, educational, and economic life without questioning the local cultural traditions.

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