

Culturally Sensitive Approaches to address Child Marriages



Samar Minallah
Khan

Culturally Sanctioned forms of Child Marriages – Girls' Mental and Physical Well-Being



- *Culture of Silence*
- *Son Preference*
- *Gender Discrimination and health*
- *Perpetuation of status quo*
- *Patriarchy*
- *Culture of convenience*



Film as a tool to break silence

SC takes up petition against Swara, Vani today

ISLAMABAD (PPI) – The Supreme Court will take up a constitutional petition challenging un-Islamic traditions of Swara and Vani today (Friday).

The petition was filed by Ms Samar Minallah, an anthropologist, and five girls given away as 'vanni', on January 16, 2006.

The Supreme Court had ordered the inspectors-general of the NWFP and Punjab to protect women in their respective provinces being given in marriage as ransom under un-Islamic customs of 'Vani' and 'Swara' (a dispute settlement in which, instead of money, young girl of offender's family is given in

marriage under the custom of Swara did not constitute marriage under the law.

A direction has also been sought from the court to declare that Swara and Vani custom should be banned immediately and the victims be released to lead a new life in accordance with the Constitution and injunctions of Islam.

She asked the court to declare that jirga decision in such cases had no legal value as they violate fundamental rights besides section 310(1) (compounding of Qisas) of the Pakistan Penal Code was unconstitutional.

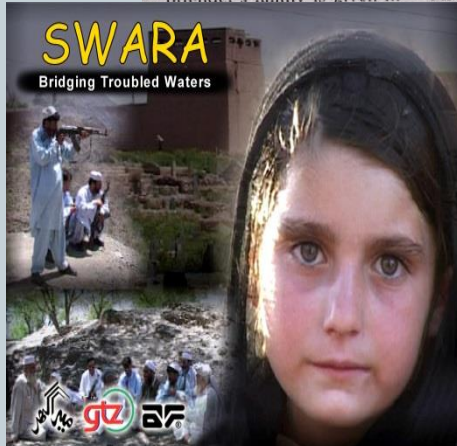
Ms Samar Minallah is carrying

**Giving voice to the voiceless
Making the invisible visible
Starting a conversation
Respectful and Empathetic**

Documentary highlights inhuman custom of Swara

By Our Reporter

Documentary on 'swara' offers balanced view of a despicable custom
Samar Minallah makes an attempt to awaken the sleeping conscience of opinion leaders



stalled media, an org in the field for social work and other children

Human Rights

ISLAMABAD: A film has been written about the North West Frontier Province and the remote image of the Pakistan, which has emerged local and western authors alike. But Pakistan culture is not merely about 'mujibism' (hospitality) and 'nazam' (disposition) — it is also about 'hadi' (revenge) and 'swara', a deplorable cultural practice under which girls are given away as ransom to the enemy's family as part of settling a dispute or settling a feud. The documentary is a humble but earnest attempt to present a balanced view of this custom. All my efforts would be worth it if even one girl is saved from being given away as 'swara' to the enemy's family for a crime committed by her brother, father or uncle.

Even though Swara has traditionally done research into the more positive aspects of Pakistan life, she just could not bear to keep silent over a topic that may not go down well with the conservative sections of the Pakistan society. But she is ready to defend her position and behaviour. The documentary is a humble but earnest attempt to create awareness regarding the negative implications of this custom. All my efforts would be worth it if even one girl is saved from being given away as 'swara' to the enemy's family for a crime committed by her brother, father or uncle.

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According to the law, the person who has committed a crime is the one who is to be punished but in 'swara' someone else pays the price of a crime. Nikah is a social contract where consent based on free will is mandatory. If a girl is not willing to marry someone, marriage would be considered void.

Junior Fida Hussain Khan says in the documentary.

The parents of the girls pray that their daughters should die of illness or disease before reaching maturity so that they do not have to witness the torment of giving them away to the enemy's family, where the innocent girls are usually made to live in an environment of hostility.

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ru and was married to other girl said that she under Swara for a murder father, who died some compensation. She said she worked as a labourer to earn money and give it to the person to end the trauma. She also received severe injuries by falling off a roof while carrying bricks. "It was only after the payment of Rs100,000 that they considered the dispute settled," she added.

The documentary deplores the role of a silent spectator being played by the society towards this gory custom.

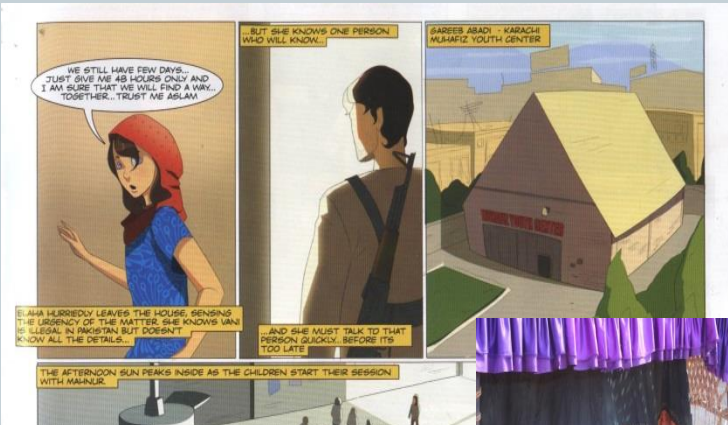
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to sacrifice their lives for the murders committed by their fathers or brothers. One minor girl said that she was only eight

insisting that she must be handed over to him immediately. Another proposal put forth by him was payment of Rs100,000 as

Unlikely Allies – Men as Partners

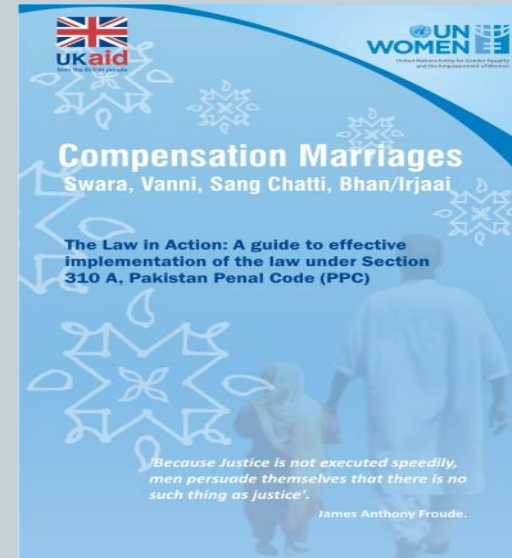


**Reaching out to those who
matter
Interactive
Sustainable
Ownership
Positivity**

Empowering Local Communities for Sustainable Change-Reaching out to those that matter



- Decision Makers
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Rural Communities



Continuity is the key

CHANGE Takes
Time

