

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.:IJAR-52324

Date: 17/06/25

Title: " *Between Faith, Family, and Fear: An Ethnographic Study of Honour-Related Violence in Muslim Communities in Western Uttar Pradesh* "

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
 Accept after minor revision.....Yes.....
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		Yes		
Techn. Quality			Yes	
Clarity		Yes		
Significance	Yes			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Feroze Ahmad

Date: 17/06/25

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

This ethnographic study offers a critical and timely exploration of honour-related violence within Muslim communities in Western Uttar Pradesh, highlighting how gender, kinship, and communal politics intersect to regulate women's autonomy. Its nuanced analysis challenges cultural essentialism and reframes honour as a dynamic, politicised discourse shaped by both community and state complicity.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This is a meticulously researched, deeply analytical, and theoretically robust study. It brings a much-needed intersectional lens to the under-examined phenomenon of honour-related violence in Indian Muslim communities, particularly in communally sensitive regions like Western Uttar Pradesh. The article offers significant contributions to feminist anthropology, critical violence studies, and South Asian socio-political discourse. I recommend **acceptance with minor revisions**, primarily to strengthen a few analytical transitions and enhance methodological transparency.

Strengths:

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1. Original Contribution and Relevance:

- The study offers a novel examination of *izzat* in Muslim contexts, diverging from the dominant Hindu caste-centered frameworks on honour crimes.
- By foregrounding the communal-political landscape post-Muzaffarnagar riots, it insightfully links gender violence to macro-structural communal dynamics, a connection rarely explored in existing literature.

2. Ethnographic Depth:

- The fieldwork is rigorous, involving diverse stakeholders (survivors, clerics, activists, police) across multiple districts.
- Use of participant observation, document analysis, and survivor narratives enhances the credibility and richness of the findings.

3. Theoretical Sophistication:

- The integration of works by Abu-Lughod, Mahmood, Kandiyoti, Foucault, and Gill is deft and meaningful.
- The concept of honour as “moral governance” and its transformation into a “communal imperative” is powerfully articulated.

4. Intersectionality and Structural Critique:

- The article does not essentialize Muslim culture but shows how gendered violence emerges at the intersection of kinship, religion, caste, community, and state complicity.
- It challenges orientalist and Islamophobic framings by situating honour violence within larger systems of power and marginalization.

5. Policy and Normative Implications:

- The call for community-based feminist interventions and critique of state complicity is timely and policy-relevant.
- The article reframes the problem not as one of culture, but of institutionalized patriarchy and communal politics.

Weaknesses:

1. Methodological Clarifications:

- While the positionality of the researcher is acknowledged (male, non-Muslim), the article could better detail how reflexivity shaped the interpretation of data.
- Access to panchayats and dispute forums is noted as limited; the implications of relying on second-hand accounts should be discussed in terms of validity.

2. Thematic Redundancy:

- Some sections (e.g., the discussion of clerical authority and community surveillance) slightly overlap in their descriptions of legitimization and enforcement, which could be consolidated for clarity.

3. Analytical Transitions:

- The transition between micro-level ethnographic insights and macro-level communal-political analysis could be smoother. At times, the narrative jumps from specific incidents to broader theoretical claims without sufficient scaffolding.

4. Citation and Recent Developments:

- While the literature base is strong, there could be a deeper engagement with more recent scholarship on honour-based violence in South Asia (post-2020), particularly in light of evolving legal frameworks like the anti-love jihad laws.

Significance and Contribution to the Field:

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- The study significantly expands our understanding of honour-related violence beyond conventional caste and Hindu-centric paradigms.
- It offers a nuanced, intersectional framework that can inform both academic theory and legal-policy interventions.
- By focusing on a highly contested socio-political geography, the article adds empirical depth to the study of communalised gender politics in India.
- It stands out in its refusal to pathologize Muslim communities, instead scrutinizing the roles of state institutions, political actors, and communal fear in sustaining patriarchal violence.

Recommendation:

Accept with Minor Revisions

This paper is a critical and timely contribution to feminist ethnography, South Asian studies, and critical violence scholarship. Its publication will significantly enrich academic discourse and potentially inform more intersectional and context-sensitive policy responses to honour-based violence.

Suggested Revisions:

1. Strengthen reflexivity and methodological transparency in the methods section.
2. Streamline overlapping content between family, clerical, and community mechanisms of control.
3. Add references to recent scholarship or developments (2020–2024), particularly regarding legal responses to interfaith marriages.
4. Slightly improve transitions between individual cases and theoretical frameworks to improve narrative flow.