

CRIMES AGAINST DIGNITY



Pakistan Law
Review's
Symposium 2019

Pakistan Law Review's Symposium 2019 on:

'Crimes Against Dignity'

By

Pakistan College of Law

in collaboration with Pakistan Center of Legal Research and Publication (PCLRP),
Arizona State University and PCL's Dignity Rights Project (Lahore Chapter of
Delaware School of Law's Dignity Rights Project)

CONCEPT OF THE PROGRAM

Harmful acts have conventionally been forbidden by way of criminalising legislation. Such acts are well known to be 'criminal' in nature as the sanction, both in terms of penalty and stigma attached to them, denote so. However, the harm conveyed by all acts is not considered to be worthy of criminal categorisation, regardless of its consequences. This can be attributed to the fact that there is no separate categorisation for such harm, since its outward manifestation is either very personal (therefore entirely dependent upon the victim's will to seek relief) or materialises after a prolonged period of time. While these reasons may pave the way for such harms to remain shrouded in confusion or shame, they protect and foster behaviour which impacts a constitutionally protected, fundamental human right- the right to dignity.

A female is subjected to catcalls and eve teasing on her way to work, is harassed by a colleague at her work place, receives persistent unwanted attention through her social media accounts or is made to withstand public shaming by showing her to be in situations questionable by the social etiquette in Pakistan; in being objectified according to the whims of others, not only are a variety of other criminal acts being perpetrated against her but furthermore, her fundamental right to dignity is being violated.

The right to dignity makes every individual inherently worthy of respect and physical integrity. This sets boundaries for the treatment of all humans. A violation of dignity would therefore, not only fall to be within the purview of a female's experiences referred to above, it would also be a perpetration of any act which engenders immediate harm, the subject of which is a human.

Examples of this include the acts harmful at large, such as those which damage the provision of tenets vital to human life such as water, food and the environment. They can also include well entrenched practices of structures such as the criminal justice system. Abuse of power by the police, the conditions of prisons, legislative provisions condoning abuse (corporal punishment etc) are all good examples of this.

Looking at such practices with a concern for dignity will not only elevate the need for immediate protection from the harm they dispense, it will also allow for the most pressing of issues to be separated from those which can be left to the devices installed by the state of Pakistan to deal with them.

With this idea in mind, the Pakistan Law Review would like to present the design of its second Symposium titled 'Crimes Against Dignity'.

Programme Title: Symposium on ‘Crimes Against Dignity’

The symposium will be divided into three parts and focus on three different areas for immediate violations of criminal nature to the right of dignity, as assured in the constitution of Pakistan.

1. Violations Against Women

These can include, among others, harassment in the workplace, legal reflections from the popular “me too” movement, cyber harassment especially with respect to bullying through social media or instances such as revenge porn.

2. Environmental Damage

With the paucity of environmental regulations in Pakistan and in the wake of the country’s slow action to combat climate change, legal observations on how immediate harm by local practices can be worked on will be relevant.

3. The Right to Fair Trial and Criminal Procedure

The right of fair trial and its interpretation in the context of the right to dignity (inadequate representation, procedural violations before, during and post-trial) will be relevant. Specific focus would be on the practices of officers of the law, the police in Pakistan. Their modus operandi, well known to be a better counterpart to the criminal behaviour they are tasked to prohibit, can be reviewed. This can be combined with reflections on practices of the police within and outside of national prisons, well known to have institutionalised abuse.

Participants

All participants will be required to author a paper for the symposium which will be published in the 2019 issue (Volume 10: issue I) of the Pakistan Law Review. While topics of the participant’s papers must fall within the heads stated above, individuals are welcome to make submissions on areas pertinent to crimes against dignity, not mentioned above.

The one-day event will be held at the Pakistan College of Law, in Lahore. The tentative dates for the event will fall in February 2019. Travel and accommodation for participants living in Pakistan but not residing in Lahore will be provided by the Pakistan College of Law.

Should you wish to become a participant, kindly send a confirmation email carrying your name, biographical information (relevant academic qualifications, current and former employment history etc.) current city/country of residence, contact details, the topic of the proposed paper and a 200-word abstract to pclrp@outlook.com.

The remainder of the submission schedule is as follows:

- Deadline for the submission of first draft: 30th November 2018
- Deadline for the submission of second (workable) draft: 10th January 2019