

20/10/20

Forced marriages in Pakistan: Causes and consequences.

Outline:

1. Introduction

1.1 Hook.

1.2 General statement

1.3 Thesis statement:

Forced marriage is an unfortunate but real problem in Pakistan. There are several causes of it like cultural causes, social causes and religious causes.

The consequences are unhappy marriages, dissociation of families, domestic violence, cousin marriages leading to genetical abnormalities, and neglect of children leading to crime in the society.

2. Decoding the term "Forced - Marriage"

2.1: several forms of forced marriages.

3. Causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

3.1 Cultural causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

3.1.1 Strong kinship groups.

[As explained by Anatol Lieven in his book: Pakistan - A hard country].

3.1.2 Out of cast marriages are still considered as a taboo.

3.1.3 Emphasis on cousin marriages.

3.1.4 Tradition of "exchange-marriages" especially in tribal areas.

3.2 Social causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

3.2.1 child marriages as a cause of forced marriages.

3.2.2. Forced conversions of minor Hindu girls
(as reported by Dawn and Amnesty International on multiple occasions)

3.2.3 lack of women empowerment.

3.2.4 Financial burden and poverty also leads to early or forced marriages.

3.2.5. Gender disparity in Pakistan

(Pakistan being on second last position in Gender parity Index (GPI) 2024)

3.3 Religious Causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

3.3.1 Use of religion as an excuse to justify women subjugation.

3.3.2. Faulty understanding of privileges of 'wali' (guardian) in Islam.

3.3.3 Religion being a constraint on mixing of genders or opposite gender friendships.

3.3.4. Wrong understanding of religious teaching due to cultural lens.

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4. Consequences of forced marriages

4.1 Unhappy marriages.

(low position of Pakistan on Human Happiness Index).

4.2 Psychological trauma

(As explained by psychologists Sigmund Freud and B. F. Skinner)

4.3. Lack of ownership of women by her family leads to domestic violence from husband and in-laws.

4.4 Dissociation of family structure — leads to ~~increased~~ ~~crime~~ rate of homicide

4.5. (Punjab prison department report 2019 proves 69% of women murderers have murdered their own husband)

4.5. Neglect of children leads to crime in the society.
(social theory of criminology)

4.6. Cousin marriages lead to genetical abnormalities in children.

~~consequences~~

5. Conclusion

Essay:

"When I was in primary school, I already knew whom I am going to marry because my family had fixed my marriage when I was born. As a child it felt exciting but when I grew up the whole perspective drastically changed. I clearly remember the horrors of that time but my family was reluctant, so I had no other option but to leave my house and family and run away." It is the story of a 19 year old girl from Southern - Punjab as reported by BBC World in its documentary ~~on~~ "Women in tribal areas" in 2021. Forced marriages is a very unfortunate but real issue of many countries of the world. Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of them. ~~Many~~ Many countries of the world have solved this issue through proper awareness, education and much needed legislations but Pakistan is still struggling to control the issue. There are numerous causes of forced marriages in Pakistan such as social causes, cultural causes and religious causes. The consequences of forced marriages are also countless but most common one ~~are~~ are: unhappy marriages, psychological trauma, domestic violence against women, dislocation of family fabric, ~~and~~ increased rate of crime in the society and more ^{risk of} genetically abnormal children due to cousin marriages -

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marriage is a social cum religious contract signed by two adults of opposite sexes with their consent and free-will to lead a life together. And forced-marriage is the one which happens without the consent of one, or both, of the signing partner(s). Most of the times it is the female partner who suffers from the horrors of the forced marriage. There are several forms of the forced marriages.

For instance; child marriages, exchange-marriages ("watta-satta"), conversion of minor girls just for the sake of marriage and human trafficking, forced marriage to the cousin or forced marriage in the cast or kinship groups. Forced-marriage ceases the right of choice and liberty of an adult person. There are numerous causes of ~~causes~~ forced marriages in Pakistan. Most common are cultural, social and religious causes.

Child marriage is ^{one} of the leading causes of forced-marriages in Pakistan. Pakistan is one of the top countries facing the issues of child marriage. According to Human rights report there are more than 12 million cases in Pakistan where girls were married before attaining the legal age of consent. Unfortunately, due to child marriage apologists from religious sectors in the legislature, the issue could not be solved in a comprehensive manner.

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Forced conversions of minor girls of Hindu community is another leading cause of forced marriages in Pakistan, especially in rural Sindh. The issue of forced conversions has been raised on the floor of parliament many a times. Leading journalist and human rights groups have also covered the issue time and again. It also raises questions on conditions of minorities and religious freedom in Pakistan. But ~~again~~ due to religious divide and communal tensions the issue ~~is~~ has not been addressed as it should have been.

Lack of women empowerment is another big reason behind forced marriages in Pakistan. The numbers of out of school children especially girls are soaring high. Lack of education leads to lack of empowerment and when women are not empowered they fail to raise voice for themselves. Women ~~not~~ being able to raise voice or gather in an organisation leads to more victimization of women, one such example is forced marriages -

Financial constraints and poverty is another reason behind forced marriages. poverty leads to early marriages of female child and these marriages are more prone to be forced. The poverty rate in Pakistan is one of the highest. According to Economic Survey of 2024-25 the poverty rate in Pakistan is 45%.

This (45% of poverty rate) suggests that almost half of population of Pakistan is living ^{below} ~~above~~ the poverty line. Under such grave situation a female child is perceived as a burden financially. This leads to early marriages against the will of the woman, further increasing the rates of forced marriages in Pakistan.

Another important cause of forced marriages in Pakistan is gender disparity. When the gender gap is high, the weaker segment always faces the cruelty from dominant segment. According to Gender Parity Index 2024, Pakistan is second worst country in regards of gender parity. This massive gender disparity in Pakistan leads to forced-marriages.

Among the cultural causes of forced marriages in Pakistan, ~~the~~ one of the most important is strong kinship groups. As explained by Anatol Lieven in his famous book: Pakistan - A hard country. The author explains that Pakistan is a collectivist society based on strong kinship groups unlike U.K or U.S.A. Most of the crimes that occur in Pakistan have some kinship basis or supported by tribal groups. The strong hold of kinship groups bar women from marrying outside the cast or group and often forced the woman to marry one of their chosen man.

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Out of the cast marriages are still considered as a taboo which leads to forced marriages of women inside their cast even against her consent. As deviance is worse than a crime - opposing the cultural norms are often ^{more} difficult than actually committing a crime. Due to the pressures women often get ready to marry against her wish. So, this castism is one of the leading causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

Cousin marriages are also very important cause of forced marriages in Pakistan. According to the Gallup survey almost half of the population are married to their first-cousin. Mostly it is not due to option but compulsion - Genetic abnormalities are ~~are~~ on rise due to cousin marriages. This brings trauma to the family and financial burden on the state. Thus, cousin marriages which are often overlooked contribute massively to the forced marriage rate in Pakistan.

~~are~~ Faulty understanding and explanation of religious issues and teachings also provide excuses to the forced marriages in Pakistan. One such ~~expt~~ example is the privileges and rights of "Wali" (guardian) in marriage of a woman. Although Islam clearly provides

right to marry according to her choice to women. There are countless examples present from Sunnah of Holy Prophet but in Pakistan the same religion ~~is~~ which provides rights to women is used in an evil way ~~intendedly~~ to victimize the women and rob their right to marry by her choice.

"Religion prohibits mixing and intermingling of genders" is another excuse used by conservative clerics to prevent women to choose a man for herself. Although Islam puts certain restrictions on open mixing of genders but it clearly provides the right to choose your own spouse but due to narrow and conservative explanation of Islam from cultural lens often snatch the rights from women. So, religious conservatism is a major cause of forced marriages in Pakistan.

Forced marriages always lead to unhappy homes. As it is an established fact that human beings love liberty more than anything else. So when someone is married forcefully the liberty is snatched. Without the sense of freedom a person can't feel happy ~~or~~ or peaceful. Furthermore, the position of Pakistan on Human Happiness Index proves the point that Pakistan is nowhere close to Scandinavian countries where people exercise freedom and liberty. So, the most common consequence of forced-marriage is a unhappy marriage and subsequent domestic violence.

Forced marriages bring psychological trauma to the victim. ~~It~~ It is one of the grave consequence of forced-marriage as proved by Sigmund Freud and B.F. Skinner in their studies. The past trauma gets a home in the mind of the person and shapes the personality and behaviour of that person. This leads to feelings of worthlessness, existential crisis and often times agitation and crime. So the psychological effects of forced marriages can't be ignored.

Another consequence of forced marriage is dissociation of family fabric. This dissociation leads to crime like homicide - Punjab prison department report of 2019 shows that 69% of female murderers are in prison due to the murder of their own husbands. Forced marriages also leads to neglect of the child in later stages of life. Child neglect is an important reason of crime according to social theory of criminology. So, it is evident that forced marriages leads to higher crime rate in the society.

Another consequence of forced cousin marriages ^{is} ~~also~~ high risk of genetic abnormalities in the children. Pakistan is one of the top countries in regards of cousin marriages and this often leads to lifelong diseases like Thalassemia major, cerebral

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palsy, mental retardation and many more. These defects cause mental trauma to their families and more burden on health care and financial departments of the state.

In a ~~nutshell~~ nutshell, even in the 21st century Pakistan is facing issues of forced marriages. The causes behind it are numerous, most common are social, cultural and religious cause. The consequences of forced marriages are unhappy marriages, dissociation of family fabric, increase in crime rate and increasing load of genetical abnormalities. Only through mass awareness, education, uplifting of lower economic classes, legislation and certain punishments this evil can be controlled and eliminated.

Always Capitalize first letter of proper noun

Your argument are okay but improve your structure and work on your articulation to make it more formal.

Avoid cutting

Use transitional devices to bring coherence

You may add recommendations to limit forced marriages