

FORCED MARRIAGES: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

1. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORCED MARRIAGE AND ARRANGE MARRIAGE.

2. HOOK: "Marriage is a bond of mutual respect and understanding and not a contract of coercion. Yet, still millions of girls are handed over in the name of traditions and family honour."

3. THESIS STATEMENT: "Forced marriage is deeply-rooted in the patriarchal norms, cultural practices and economic dependencies that continue to ~~harm~~ violate basic ^{human} rights and the fundamental rights - especially that of women, resulting in the psychological, social and inter-generational consequences that ~~obscure~~ ^{hinders} the progress of the society at-large."

2. CAUSES OF FORCED MARRIAGES:-

- 2a. Patriarchal society and gender inequality.
- 2b. Lack of financial independence / ~~less~~ Economic dependence upon the family.
- 2c. Lack of education.
- 2d. Religious misinterpretation.
- 2e. Women entitled to ~~own~~ inherit property.
- 2f. To save the ethnic or tribal identity.
- 2g. Practices of ~~arranged~~ ^{Savarna} Vani and Watta Satta (exchange ~~of~~ marriage).

WORK ON YOUR LANGUAGE

PLZ BREAK INTO SHORT SENTENCES

3. CONSEQUENCES OF FORCED MARRIAGES:

- 3a. Violation of the Human rights.
- 3b. Psychological impacts.
- 3c. Domestic violence.
- 3d. Dissolution of marriage.
- 3e. Inter-generational trauma.
- 3f. Hindrance to women education.

4. CONCLUSION

(1)

"A wedding without consent is not a union,
it's a prison"

Marriage is considered as the cornerstone of our society, the basic institution upon which the whole family life is built. It is a sacred bond between husband and wife based upon mutual trust, love and affection; not a contract of coercion. Yet, still millions of girls are handed over in the name of traditions and family honor. Forced marriage means, a marriage contracted without the consent of either both or either of the spouses. The consent of parties is the main deciding factor between forced marriage and arrange marriage. This concept of forced marriage is not new; rather it existed since the Ancient civilization. In contemporary times, it is still practiced in Middle East, South Asia and South Africa. The main driving force behind the means of forced marriage is the deep-rooted patriarchal norms, cultural practices and economic dependencies that

Continue to violate basic Human rights and fundamental rights - especially that of women, resulting in the psychological, social and inter-generational ~~human~~ consequences that hinders the progress of the society at large.

The first main cause of forced marriages in Pakistan lies in Patriarchal norms, that regulate each and every aspect of the Society. The males are regarded as the headed of the family and they exercise this authority by taking decisions about the life of each member of the family; especially the female members. ~~If~~ In case, a woman dares to take a decision about her own life, she is often perceived as someone who has dishonoured her family and brought shame upon his name. Marriage is regarded as one of the most important decision of one's life; but due to gender inequality, ^{women} they are denied the right to choose the partner of their own choice. Granting them right of consent in matters of marriage, is perceived equivalent to a blow to man's pride. E.g. according to a report published by UNDP, ^{Pakistani} women in gender parity index stands 14)X "World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025, Pakistan ranks last out of 148 countries." Such mindset undermines women autonomy and reflects deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and gender inequality.

Moreover, the second main cause of forced marriage in Pakistan, is the lack of women financial independence. In Pakistan,

62% of the total population lives below the poverty line, where it becomes extremely difficult to fulfill even the basic needs of the family. ^{women} are dependent upon the male members to fulfill their needs. Likewise, in such patriarchal society, where women as per the pre-determined customs of the society have to leave her parents after marriage so in order to reduce the financial burden, the parents get their daughters married as soon as she gains ~~pub~~ puberty. In rural areas of Pakistan, ~~some~~ ~~today~~ women are sold by the parents, whoever pays the highest bid money, he will receive the woman. Due to poverty, parents even agree to marry their daughters to an aged person, if he can afford to pay high bride money and dowry. E.g, As per the report published by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, "women and girls in Pakistan, especially those from poor backgrounds are often trafficked or sold under the guise of marriage, reflecting serious human rights violations. Therefore, due to the financial constraints and lack of resources, many women fail to exercise their basic rights."

Likewise, the third Cause of forced marriage lies in the lack of education. Illiteracy is the main factor that hinders women to exercise her right to ~~consent~~ ^{give} consent in the event of marriage. As uneducated women are considered to be foolish, unwise and one who lacks sense. They are viewed as; who is not able enough to take a sound decision about herself. This gives the license to the male members of her family to take the decisions about her life without her consent. Ignorance about legal rights

adds fuel to the continuation of forced marriages. Similarly, illiterate parents do not give much importance to the consent of their daughter. Due to lack of awareness, they are unaware, ~~about~~ that consent is the legal requirement to be fulfilled in order to solemnise a valid marriage. In Pakistan, where overall literacy rate is below 62% (AEPAM-2022), uneducated families blindly follow the traditional norms, ~~and~~ considering marriage as a matter of honor, with giving little or no importance to the consent. Hence, education is essential for creating awareness and enabling the individuals in general and women in particular to make informed and independent decisions about marriage.

Similarly, the fourth cause of forced marriage is the religious misinterpretations. As according to Shafi school of thought, the consent of guardian is declared compulsory for marriage. In other words, the consent of guardian is given importance as compared to that of the parties to marriage. In this way, the main ingredient of a valid marriage, 'ijab-o-qabool' is ignored in toto. According to a Hadith; Holy Prophet (S.A.W) annulled the marriage of a woman forced into a wedlock, proving that Islam upholds free will and personal choice in marriage. Unfortunately, due to lack of religious understanding and reliance on traditional customs, often families act in the ~~complete~~ contravention to the true Islamic principles.

Furthermore, the fifth sphere ~~where~~ cause of women forced marriage is that in many patriarchal societies, women who ~~are~~ legally own or are entitled to inherit property often becomes victims to forced marriages. Families driven by greed and societal norms, compel ~~that~~ such women to marry within the family - usually cousins or uncles - partners in order to retain the property within the family. In some cases, women are forced into ~~even~~ marriages without their knowledge or consent, only to transfer the land in the husband's name. This practice not only violates the Religious Islamic teachings which grants the women right to own property & manage the property but also ~~violates~~ the basic ingredient of ~~ifab-d-gabool~~ consent - the fundamental ~~ingredient~~ ^{e.g. according to a report published by Pakistan society for gender review} for a valid marriage. As a result, families exploit cultural traditions and ~~misuse~~ religion to justify their actions. This problem is prevalent in rural areas, where weak enforcement mechanism and social dependence makes women vulnerable. Thus, women property ownership often becomes a cause of forced marriages, ^{disguised} in the name of tradition, family values and culture, ~~disguised as marriage~~, turning marriage into a means of preserving wealth rather than forming a voluntary partnership.

Additionally, another major cause of forced marriages is the desire to preserve the ethnic & tribal identity. Many parents prefer to marry their children within the family in order to maintain the purity of the blood line and protect the traditional norms and values. Among immigrants particularly those settled

in the Western countries, it is a common practice for parents to fix the marriages of their sons and daughters with their relatives in the home country. They perceive it as a way to protect their cultural norms, religious values and language in the foreign environment. Similarly, in the tribal setup of societies of Pakistan, marriages are often fixed in the childhood without the consent of the partners. The elders of the tribe consider it their right to decide such unions, believing that daughters-in-law from within the family will best uphold the traditional norms of the tribe instead of the outsiders. The ~~another~~ ^{Prevent} ~~another~~ major reason is that they want to ~~avoid~~ ^{Prevent} the ~~mingling~~ of the outsiders. The cultural preservation and social conformity often overrides the individual choices leading to forced marriages ~~both within~~ in both immigrant & tribal context.

Significantly, the seventh cause of forced marriages is the ~~tradition~~ prevalence of the traditional practices of Samra, Vani and Wattasatta. These customs are widespread in the Pakistani society and tribal society in particular. In Samra, girls are forced into early marriages to prevent social stigma as a precautionary measure to avoid dishonor. E.g. In some tribal societies girls are first married within their extended family and then allowed to study in universities. Resultantly, they are deprived to choose the partner of their choice. Similarly, Vani is a practice, where girls, usually between 9 and 16 are ~~married~~ married off.

in order to settle the disputes such as murder, ~~the~~ honor killing and tribal disagreements. For instance, daughter or sister is given to the victims family if the male member, such as father or brother has committed a crime. ~~Watta Satta~~ - ~~another form of forced~~ marriage, it is ^{also} called an exchange marriage where brides are swapped between the families as a means of security and mutual commitment. These practices are deeply rooted in our society, treating women as a tool to settle the disputes, maintain family agreements and to protect the honor, while denying their basic fundamental rights.

^{these underlying causes} As a result of forced marriages, ^{they} produce a number of detrimental effects upon the women and society at large. The ~~fore~~ foremost consequence of the forced marriage is the violation of the basic human rights. It is a direct attack on the rights guaranteed under the UNHCR and CEDAW. Moreover, in such marriages, women are deprived of their fundamental rights guaranteed under constitution of Pak, 1973. Since forced marriage takes place without free consent, it violates the principles of personal liberty, movement and to live with dignity. ~~women are forced~~ compelled to remain. In such unions, due to the societal norms and cultural practices women are ~~bound~~ compelled to remain within the unwanted relationships. This situation frequently exploits the results in sexual exploitation, confinement and complete loss of autonomy. ~~these~~ In recognition of these injustices, the Supreme Court of Pak in 2004 SCMR396 declared that "Any marriage held without the free consent of the women is invalid and against the injunctions of Islam."

Hence, forced marriages are not as ~~powerful~~ ^{powerful} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~to suppress the women~~ ^{to suppress the women} rights granted ~~but~~ ^{under} both national & intl frameworks.

The Second Consequence of the forced marriage is its deep-rooted psychological impact on women. The emotional toll that women suffer in such unions, ultimately leads to anxiety, ~~depp~~ ^{depression} and in severe case Post-traumatic Stress disorder. When young girls are forced into marriages, they suffer a ~~severe~~ ^{severe} emotional ~~a~~ ^{trauma} when women are forced into marriages without love, affection and mutual understanding. it destroys their self-esteem ultimately ~~ten~~ ^{results} in loss of self-worth. ~~For~~ ^{Similarly}, young girls who lack ~~the~~ ^{the} capability to withstand ~~the~~ ^{the} in such unions consider themselves trapped which causes mental distress and helplessness ^{sense} due to which they resort to self-harm or in extreme cases suicide. Consequently the women who are forced into forced marriages carry life-long ~~severe~~ ^{severe} emotional scars, and struggling silently under the weight of trauma & societal neglect.

In a similar manner, the third Consequence of forced marriage is that it give rise to domestic violence when the spouses are bound together without their free will and understanding. ^{there} This relationship lacks the foundation of trust, respect and mutual connection. ~~This~~ ^{absence} of understanding often leads to conflict, ~~violence~~ ^{domestic violence} when women attempt to resist such control. They are frequently subjected to physical assault, sexual abuse and psychological trauma. In Pakistan, despite the legal framework such as (Domestic Violence Prevention & Protection Act, 2012) women remain unheard due to ^{social} ~~social~~ ^{pressures} and cultural taboos. A notable ~~case~~ ^{example} is the case of Humaira v. Abbas (2015 PLD LHM 522) ^{where} ~~where~~ the court declared that marriage solemnized without free consent ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~invalid~~ ^{invalid}.

women constitutional rights. Thus forced marriage not only destroys marital harmony, but also perpetuates the cycle of violence within the families.

~~For~~ Furthermore, the fourth consequence of the forced marriage is the eventual breakdown of marital relationships when the spouses are compelled to establish a union without their consent; ^{they are unable to maintain harmony} their relationship lacks the mutual understanding, trust and the emotional connection. ^{likewise,} both ^{the partners} when both consider themselves trapped and confined, they are unable to understand and accept each other's needs and boundaries. **SUCH PHRASES** the cooperation and compromise difficult. Since both the partners are unwilling to accept each other's needs & boundaries, minor disagreements often escalate into major disputes. Over time the persistent conflict frequently results in dissolution of marriage, leaving both the parties both emotionally & socially vulnerable.

Additionally, the fifth consequence of the forced marriage is the emergence of inter-generational trauma. When the spouses are ^{bounded} compelled into a relationship without their consent, they are often unable to ^{provide} give a stable and nurturing environment to their children. The children, born to such parents inherit the burden emotional burden & psychological stress - unhappy relationship which affects them throughout their lives. Growing up in such families, they come to ^{abuse} view abuse and mental and physical violence as they normalize mental abuse & physical violence, as they have witnessed these mistreatment & violence throughout their formative years. ~~Over so, forced marriage not only harm the individuals directly involved but also perpetuates the cycles of trauma but carry out extend throughout the future generations.~~

The sixth major consequence of forced marriage is women lack of educational access. Once married, many women are confined to the primarily to the domestic responsibilities and their personal aspirations such as; continuing education or to carry on a professional career or to seek a skill are actively suppressed. This denial not only ~~results in~~ ^{limits their} intellectual & personal development & career prospects, leaving them dependent upon the male members of the family for the social financial & social support. Over time, it not only personally affects the women's individual development but also ~~results in~~ ^{gives rise to} cycles of gender inequality as women with less education are not able to ~~to~~ fully take part in the decision-making, contribute to the society or to advocate for their own rights. Thus, forced marriages not only act as the barrier to individual development but also to ~~the~~ broader social progress.

"Forced marriage is the violation of human rights stripping women choice, freedom & equality."

In ~~Conclusion~~ conclusion, forced marriages ~~remains~~ a persistent challenge of our society, deeply rooted in poverty, lack of education, cultural norms, religious misinterpretations, property disputes and desire to preserve the family or tribal identity. ~~These practices not only violate the basic human rights but also the fundamental rights of women.~~ These practices not only violate the basic human rights, but also leads to psychological ^{trauma} ~~and~~ ^{and} domestic violence, dissolution of marriage and inter-generational trauma. To combat this menace, it is imperative to strengthen legal enforcement, promote women education, raise social awareness & challenge harmful traditions.