

# FORCED MARRIAGES: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

## OUTLINE:

### 1. INTRODUCTION

### 2. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORCED MARRIAGE AND ARRANGE MARRIAGE

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."

## PLZ BREAK INTO SHORT SENTENCES

1. **THESIS STATEMENT:** "Forced marriage is deeply-rooted in the patriarchal norms, cultural practices and economic dependences that continue to ~~hinder~~ violate basic <sup>Human</sup> rights and and the fundamental rights - especially that of women, resulting in the psychological, social and inter-generational consequences that ~~cause~~ to hinder the progress of the society at-large."

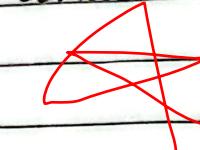
### 2. CAUSES OF FORCED MARRIAGES:-

- 2a. Patriarchal society and gender inequality.
- 2b. Lack of financial independence / 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 <sup>Sawam</sup> ~~Barter~~, Vani and Watta Satta (exchange marriage).

### 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



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"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 arranged 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 menace 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 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 head 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 dishonored 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, <sup>women</sup> 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, "Pakistan women in gender Parity index stands 141" in 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 lies 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~~ publicity. In rural areas of Pakistan, ~~young~~ women are sold by the parents, whoever pays the highest bid money, he will receive the women. 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~~ 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 solemnize a valid marriage. In Pakistan, where overall literacy rate is below 62%. (AEPAM-2022), uneducated families blindly follows the traditional norms, ~~but~~ 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 shafe 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 fact.

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 ~~convention~~ contravention to the true Islamic principles.

Further more, the fifth option ~~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 marriage. Families driven by greed and societal norms, compel ~~them~~ 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 freely but also violates the basic ingredient of ijab-o-qabool. Consent - the fundamental ~~one~~ ingredient for a valid marriage. <sup>e.g. according to a report published by Pakistan's civil society review</sup> 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 make women vulnerable. Thus, women property ownership often becomes a cause of forced marriage, <sup>disguised</sup> in the name of tradition, family values and culture, ~~disguised~~ 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 bloodline and protect the traditional norms and values. Among immigrants particularly <sup>more</sup> with less

in the western countries, it is a common practice for parents to fix the marriages of their sons or daughters 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 daughter-in-law from within the family will best uphold the traditional norms of the tribe instead of the outside. Another major reason is that; they want to prevent the mingling of the outsiders. The cultural preservation and social conformity often overrides the individual choices leading to forced marriages in both immigrant & tribal context.

Significantly, the seventh cause of forced marriages is the traditional prevalence of the traditional practices of Saneera, Vani and Wattasatta. These customs are widespread in the Pakistani society and tribal society in particular. In Saneera, 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 ~~are~~ married off.

in order to settle the disputes such as murder, honor killing and tribal disagreements. For instance, daughter or sister is given to the victim's 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 as exchange marriages 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 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 UNHR and CEDAW.~~

Moreover, in such marriages, women are deprived of their fundamental rights guaranteed under constitution of Pak, 1947. Since forced marriage takes place without free consent, it violates the principles of personal liberty, movement and to live with dignity. Women are forced 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. In recognition of these injustices, the Supreme Court of Pak in 2004 (CMR 396) declared that "Any marriage held without the free consent of the women is illegal and against the teachings of Islam."

Hence, forced marriages are not a violation of the women's rights under both national & international 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, deeper depression and in severe cases Post-traumatic Stress disorder. When young girls are forced into marriages, they suffer a sense of loss when women are forced into marriage without love, affection and mutual understanding. It destroys their self-esteem ultimately resulting in loss of self-worth. Young girls who lack the capacity to withdraw from such unions consider themselves trapped which causes mental distress and helplessness due to which they resort to self-harm or in extreme cases suicide. Consequently, the women who are coerced into forced marriages carry life-long 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 gives rise to domestic violence when the spouses are bound together without their free will and understanding. This relationship lacks the foundation of trust, respect and mutual connection. This absence of understanding often leads to conflict, harassment & 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 societal pressure and cultural taboos. A notable case example is the case of *Humanis v/s Abbas* (2015 PLD LAH 532) where the court declared that marriage solemnized without free consent is illegal.

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 estb a union without their Consent; ~~they are unable to maintain harmony.~~ their relationship lacks the mutual understanding, trust and the emotional connection. <sup>The Partners</sup> Likewise, both <sup>when both</sup> consider themselves trapped and confined, they are unable to understand each other, accept each other's needs and boundaries. ~~both~~ <sup>both</sup> 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.

## SUCH PHRASES

Additionally, the fifth consequence of the forced marriage is the emergence of inter-generational trauma. When the spouses are compelled into a relationship without their an unwanted relationship, they are often unable to <sup>provide</sup> 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 effect them throughout their lives. Growing up in such families, they consider abuse and mental <sup>abuse</sup> and ~~mental~~ children may come to normalize mental abuse & physical violence, as they have witnessed ~~if~~ 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 that carry out extend throughout the so 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 carrying on a professional career or to seek a skill are often suppressed. This denial not only results in limits their intellectual 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 individual development but also results in gender give rise to cycles of gender inequality as women with less education are not able to fully take part in the decision-making, contribute to the society or to advocate for their own rights. Thus, forced marriage not only acts as the barrier to individual development but also to broader social progress.

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

In ~~Conclusion~~ conclusion, forced marriage ~~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 contravene international human rights but also the fundamental rights of women.~~ These practices not only violate the basic human rights, but also leads to psychological ~~trauma~~ & mental health issues, domestic violence, dissolution of marriage and inter-generational

~~trauma~~ To combat this ~~trauma~~, it is imperative to strengthen legal enforcement, promote women education, raise social awareness & change the cultural traditions.