

Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences

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(UN Women Report)

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(WHO Report).

3.5 Reduce opportunities of education and Employment
(United Nations Population Fund Report (UNFPA))

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(World Bank Report)

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of laws to reduce
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(Egypt (case study))

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Good ...your points and essay are
okay but avoid grammatical errors

ESSAY

In Pakistan, men consider themselves the wardens of the physical prisons of women. They lock up their bodies in the dungeons of religious righteousness and throw away the keys. Women in such a society do not have any freedom. Male members of a family do not ask the consent of women in marriages. As a result, women become the victims of forced marriages. There are several causes of forced marriages in Pakistan. Firstly, the entrenched patriarchal norms in society lead to forced marriages. In addition, forced marriages are usually carried out to settle disputes and to gain economic benefits. Moreover, lack of awareness

and weak law enforcement perpetrate the practice of forced marriages. The menace of forced marriages has several consequences.

Firstly, it leads to the rise of domestic violence and emotional trauma. Furthermore, it gives rise to the upstroke in divorce and suicide rate in society. Therefore, it is a need of time to take measures to root out the menace of forced marriages from society.

These include social awareness and enforcement of laws to reduce forced marriages. Thus, forced marriages in Pakistan are caused by Patriarchal norms and lack of awareness. It has several consequences including domestic violence and emotional trauma. It can be reduced by taking corrective measures.

The entrenched patriarchy in society results in forced marriages. A man dictates the important decisions of a family including those concerning women. As a result, women have no agency and live a subjugated life. To illustrate, Shaameen Obaid Chinoy, an Oscar recipient, she stated that women in Pakistan live a life of subservience. They are not allowed to take the important decisions of their life including marriages. Hence proved, patriarchal norms in Pakistani society give rise to forced marriages.

In addition, forced marriages are used as a tool to settle disputes. Woman is considered not less than a commodity to reduce tensions between two families. As a result,

woman is forced to marry against her will. For example, the "Wani Culture" is rampant in the rural areas of Sindh and KP. As per this custom, a woman is being forced to marry a man, usually older person, of enemy family to resolve blood disputes. Thus, to settle family feuds women are forced to marry against their consent.

Similarly, forced marriages are also used as a tool to gain economic benefits. Women in Pakistan are used as a social currency to gain pecuniary benefits. The same practice was in vogue in the Greece, many years ago. For example, last year, a case of forced marriage resurfaced

in news. A fifteen-year-old girl, Maryam, was forced by her father to marry an old man to pay his debt. In short, the custom of forced marriages is rampant to gain economic benefits.

Furthermore, illiteracy and unawareness of legal rights lead to forced marriages of women. It has been said that due to illiteracy and young age, girls are unaware of their legal right regarding marriages. As a result, they acquiesce and do not resist forced marriages. According to the United Nations Women Report, "Forced marriages are rampant in Pakistan due to ignorance and less awareness." Around 2000 girls were forced to marry without their will in 2024. Thus, the

menace of forced marriages goes unnoticed due to lack of awareness of legal rights.

Moreover, there is weak enforcement of laws to reduce forced marriages. Marriages are often considered to be the internal matter of a family. As a result, law enforcement agencies rarely intervene to reduce forced marriages. As per the World Bank report, "the weaknesses of law enforcement agencies, to prosecute the culprits of forced marriages, lead to the propagation of this custom." In short, the inability of law enforcement agencies to prevent the crime of forced marriages leads to increased forced marriages in Pakistan.

Lastly, the misinterpretation

of Islamic injunctions to justify forced marriages is also one of the cause of forced marriages. Men hold and interpret Islamic injunctions to achieve their vested interests. As a result, it is erroneously perceived that men have right to marry a woman against their will. To illustrate, Allah ordained Holy Prophet (PBUH) to marry his daughter to Hazrat Ali (RA). Despite Allah order, Holy Prophet (PBUH) first asked about the consent of her daughter before marriage. On another occasion, a woman told Holy Prophet (PBUH) that her father had married her without her consent. Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked the woman either to keep the marriage or to dismiss it. Hence proved, Islamic teachings are misinterpreted to justify forced marriages.

The preceding paragraphs discussed the causes of forced marriages in Pakistan.

The following paragraphs will discuss its consequences.

Firstly, forced marriages in Pakistan lead to rise in domestic violence and physical abuse. It is because forced marriages lead to unhappy marriages. Men usually abuse his partner to maintain his dominance. As a result, women become victims of physical and mental abuse. According to the United Nations Human Commission Report, "More than 20,000 women in Pakistan face domestic violence each year."

Thus, the consequences of forced marriages in Pakistan include domestic violence.

In addition, forced marriages lead to emotional trauma for the next generation. Children observe the arguments between their parents. Witnessing domestic violence affects the psyche of children. As a result, physical abuse inculcates mental trauma in children. As per the Dawn Newspaper Report, "Several children resort to illegal activities due to physical abuse instances witnessed by them in young age". Hence proved, forced marriages have a deleterious effect on the young generation.

Furthermore, it leads to increased rate of divorce in society. The lack of mutual understanding due to forced marriages increases the rate of divorce in

society. According to the Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies Report, "The divorce rate in Pakistan is increasing due to forced marriages and physically abusive partners. The statistics have grown up to 1000 divorces per year." Hence, increased divorce rate is the direct corollary of forced marriages in Pakistan.

Moreover, the consequence of forced marriages is the upstick in suicide rate among females in Pakistan. Women ^{often} resort to suicide when they can not do anything to end the abusive marriage especially forced marriages. According to the World Health Organization Report "500 cases of ^{women} suicide were reported in 2024". Thus, forced marriages lead

to the rise of suicide cases of women.

Lastly, forced marriages reduce opportunities of education and employment for women. When women are forced to marry in young age, they usually have less opportunities to complete their education or to gain an employment. As a result, women become more dependent on men.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Report, "Forced marriages reduce the chances of education and employment for women in Pakistan." Hence, women have less opportunities in life due to forced marriages.

The above paragraphs explained the consequences of forced marriages in Pakistan. The following paragraphs

will explain the corrective measures to reduce forced marriages in Pakistan.

Firstly, the government should increase literacy rate and social awareness to reduce the increasing trend of forced marriages.

By giving financial incentives to families, parents will be more likely to send their daughters to school. According to the World Bank report, "Education is a paramount important to reduce the old norms that perpetuate forced marriages." Moreover, awareness should be spread through media to discourage forced marriages. For instance, "such programs should be broadcasted which create awareness in society regarding the negative consequences of forced marriages." Thus, Education and social awareness can act as a bulwark against

forced marriages.

In addition, law enforcement agencies should strictly enforce laws to reduce forced marriages. Laws will deter culprits from committing such crimes. For instance, government should enforce "Anti-Child Act 2025" and "Hindu Marriage Act" to reduce forced marriages. Similarly, the government of Egypt has enforced laws which provide strict penalties to the culprits of child marriages. Hence, the enforcement of strict laws will help to reduce child marriages.

In a nutshell, the menace of enforced marriages goes unabated in Pakistan. It has several causes including the patriarchal

norms, the greed of material benefits and the lack of awareness. As a result, it has several consequences. These include domestic violence and the rise of divorce and suicide rate among women. Therefore, certain corrective measures like social awareness and strict enforcement of laws should be implemented to deter forced marriages in Pakistan. In Pakistan, women like men have the right to decide about their future without any coercion from men.
