

Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In the shadows of celebratory wedding traditions, a more sinister practice persists, one where consent is sacrificed at the altar of custom and control:

the forced marriages.

The clear distinguish between arranged marriage and forced marriage is that, the free will, consent and family facilitated marriage is arrange marriage. On the other hand forced marriage is a contract between two with out the consent, free will and choice of their own by one or both the parties. This distinguish shows a clear flaw in Pakistan's marriage system as an ill, despite legal and religious Provisions.

Although forced marriages in Pakistan is a complex phenomenon deeply rooted in Patriarchal Structures, economic deprivation,

and distorted cultural norms, whose consequences create a devastating ripple effect, perpetuating cycles of psychological traumas, economic disempowerment, and social stagnation, thereby demanding a multi-pronged reform strategy.

2. Historical and cultural context:

2.1 Historical underpinnings:

2.2 Cultural and religious role:

2.3 The "Honor" Paradigm:

3.1 The Multifaceted Causes of Forced Marriages:

3.1.1 Concept of Guardianship

3.1.2. Female less bodily autonomous.

3.1.3. Lack / weak Agency.

3.2. Economic Drivers and perpetuation of Poverty.

3.2.1 The Watts Satta

3.2.2 Vani & Dowry concept.

3.2.3 Read Economic security

3.3. Traditional Ethnocentric imperatives.

3.3.1 Caste Endogamy

3.3.2 Fear of Social Stigma.

3.4 Legal Lacunae and Weak enforcement

3.4.1 Gap between Law and Practice.

3.4.2 Complicity of state institutions.

4.0 Unbearable Consequences.

4.1 Psychological and Emotional scars.

4.1.1 mental Trauma.

4.1.2 Loss of ~~individual~~ identity and Agency.

4.2 Physical and Reproductive Health hazards.

4.3 Socio Economic Disempowerment.

4.3.1 Economic Dependency:

4.3.2 Education crippled.

4.4 Broader societal and National repercussions.

5.0 Reform and measures to cure this ill.

5.1. ~~Reforms~~ Reforms legal and educational

5.1.1. legal Reforms

5.1.2 Educational empowerment

5.1.3 Awareness.

5.2 Conclusion

Since the colonial era, in fact before that the sub-continent region has the roots in traditional norms, value and cultural practices. These practices are not religious that they are not inherited in Islam but are pre-Islamic, tribal and feudal customs. Because they are deep rooted in to social fabric, therefore the perpetrators often misuse religious rhetoric to justify the practice.

However, in Islam it has been emphasized to take the consent of the bride, this practice shows the right of free will given to the female by Islam.

But the conflict rises when the customs and traditions are sometimes mixed and sometimes prioritized over the deen in the Pakistani society. Moreover, the concept of "Honor" (Izzat) and "zealotry" (ghairat) is also more followed, it ~~emphasizes~~ emphasizes the family honor in female that is the control over the body and decision making of the women specially in the choice of marriage.

This historical and cultural implication of forced marriages in Pakistan has its causes that are also through the traditional values of the society.

The formal gender inequality and hegemonic practice in the patriarchal society is caused by such many factors one of them is the concept of "wali".

The misuse of this concept as the guardian mean the absolute authority it weakens women's agency and decision making, -the more the male guardianship the lesser the women's life choices.

Furthermore, the marriages are used to control women's bodies, desires, and mobility. Through this the women becomes less autonomous and male pre-empting any behavior deemed dishonorable. This also leads to the denial of agency and women become incapable of making sound decisions about their own life.

The leading factor of denial of agency is further inflicted and causes economic deprivation. Women through forced marriages is used for economic purposes. One of the concept of watta satta (Barter exchange) is a practice between two families to avoid paying dowry. This is as treating women as the commodities. The same related concept of Vaniswara is the practice of giving a young girl in marriage as a form of dispute settlement. This is a huge violation of human rights sanctioned by tribal Girsas. Although in forced marriages if not through watta satta and Vaniswara even women are deprived economically through the debt settlement and dowry, that is in the marriage financial debts are overcome or acquire dowry. It is seen as the economic transaction for the groom's family. There also daughters are married to wealthier families as a strategy for their financial future.

often disregarding their personal choices. - this traditional mindset of accumulating the wealth through the force marriage deprives the economic will and empowerment of women. Therefore, Patriarchal society does not provide - the economic security to women.

However, the interconnectedness of the causes from historical to economical causes, the traditional ethnocentric imperatives and socio cultural are also the causes of forced marriages in tribal regions like Pakistan.

These socio-cultural ~~are~~ paradigms can be traced in caste endogamy and biradri system. In this system the society pressurized the families to marry - the daughters within the biradri and caste ~~and~~ (clan) to maintain social purity. This leads to the fear of what people will say if a daughter remains unmarried past a certain age.

These ethnocentric practices also holds the consolidation of power and property. ~~But~~ Resolving inter-family and inter-tribal disputes.

Comparatively these paradigms that causes forced marriages are lead and supported by the law system of Pakistan because the common and Shariah law has the weaknesses and enforcement is very low.

The lacunae can be traced through the practice and law it self.

As the child Marriage Restraint Act (1929) and its amendments exist, implementation is weak.

Furthermore, the lack of specific legislation and complicity of state institutions is robust.

Keeping in view the causes of the forced marriages in Pakistan which are ~~very~~ ~~so~~ so much rooted in the system. ~~to~~ These causes

have their impacts and devastating consequences. leading the 1st consequence is the psychological and emotional disturbance of the women in Pakistan due to force marriages.

High prevalence of depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and in extreme cases, suicidal ideation and cuts. Mostly in rural areas women are deprived of mental health as it also because lack of treatment and ~~also~~ availability of psychologists and due medication. This further leads to the profound sense of helplessness.

There also some victims may develop coping mechanisms that resemble sympathy for their captors (Stockholm Syndrome).

After the mental health the physical

and reproductive health is also disturbed.

As the early age marriages for child brides, higher risks of obstetric fistula, Pre mature births and maternal mortality.

The Forced marriages have a strong correlation with domestic abuse, Sexual violence, marital rape, and other forms of domestic violence. This leads to the denial of rights related to family planning and reproductive health.

However, the forced marriages impart social life and economic disempowerment, economic abduction of rights with no education or skills, victims remains financially dependent on their spouses, with no participation in social, political and citizenship works they are kept home. In fact, the education is truncated.

Girls are often pulled out of schools to be married, permanently crippling their potential for economic independence. Although, it is witnessed that not only domestically but beyond societal and national consequences are faced. That is obvious through a significant portion of the population (women) is prevented from contributing productively to the economy and society. In the wake of these repercussions Pakistan faces consistent criticism in international human right reports. eg: UNICEF, Human Rights Watch etc for its failure to curb this practice, damaging its global standing. Thereby, societies built on coercion and injustice have the weak social fabric.

The Pakistani society is facing a huge trauma and damaged global image due to these traditional ill practices like forced marriage.

Therefore, a multi-sectoral reform strategy can enhance the societal value not by the traditional norms.

The first and foremost reform should be the legal reform.

Enact and strictly enforce specific anti-forced marriage laws.

Establish gender sensitive courts and train law enforcement.

In education mandate and measure the female education. Ensure it upto a higher level. Integrate life skills and legal rights education into

School curricula.

Furthermore, launch nation wide awareness campaigns through, media, religious leaders, and community elders.

Economically promote vocational centres, and micro-finance arena for financial independence

To Sum up, the force marriage in Pakistan. As forced marriage is not a private family matter but a critical public issue with national implications. Because the cause are so intensified which are historical, economical, religious and cultural as the concept of ~~stani~~, watta satta, dowry leading to the economic insecurity of women, less empowerment, abduction of rights, lack of agency, deprivation of education. Through the views of traditional ethnocentric imperatives, the caste endogamy and fear of social stigma. These supported by legal lacunae and weak enforcement of law in Pakistan that imparts the mental health of women give emotional scars, mental trauma and loss of identity and agency. Further it hits the physical and reproductive health of women as well.

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Also effecting the Socio-economic
empowerment and broader societal
and national repercussions for
Pakistan.

Therefore, the reforms are must
through the means of legal,
educational and awareness among
the masses.

So, "Eradicating forced marriage
is a monumental task, but it is a
necessary one for Pakistan to
realize its true potential. It
requires nothing less than a
collective moral courage to champion
the right to choose over the weight
of coercion, and in doing so, forge a
future where the nation's strength
is measured by the freedom and
dignity of its daughters."