Essay

Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and consequences.

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B Deteriorating socio-economic conditions catalyze the forced marriages

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E Male child perceived as social security; female as a burden

F Lack of robust implementation of legal framework.

G Lack of education and awareness vis-a-vis to forced marriages

4 Unforeseen consequences of the forced marriages in Pakistan.

A Increased stratification and division in family and marriage institution

B Rising incidents of domestic violence

stemmed from forced marriages.

C. Increase in divorce rates impacting social well being of children

D. Entrapping women in vicious cycles of exploitation and human trafficking.

5. Conclusion

Despite Quaid-e- Azam, the father of nation's, explicit declarations that no nation make progress unless their women stand side by side with male counterparts, and, Allama Iqbal's renowned poem celebrated women that the picture that this world presents from woman gets its tints and scents, in pakistan women disproportionately endured the vicious cycles of institutionlized patriarchy and forced marriages. Forced marriages are against in blatant contravention to human rights and civilized societies always discourage this abhorrent and inhumane approach. Meanwhile, forced marriages are defined as the wedlock or marriage contract with force and intimination. In forced marriages, the consent of either party - male or female - is largely ignored and forcibly compelled them to contract marriage. Forced marriages have far-reaching impacts beyond the personal level and results

in unforeseen consequences. In Pakistan, peer pressure especially in tribal and remote areas with deteriorated socio-economic well-being serve as a primary and instrumental cause of forced marriage. Frequent climate events exposes the vulnerabilities of young girls ~~wife~~ to forced marriages. In many low-income or middle-income households, male child perceived as social security and female as a burden, so these outdated and narrow thoughts trigger forced marriages. Above all, the lack of robust implementation of legal framework creates a fertile ground for forced marriages. However, the ~~as~~ over-arching effects of forced marriages are: increased rates of divorce; prevailed stratification and division in families and rising incidents of domestic violence. Therefore, it goes beyond the iota of doubt that there are multiple causes of forced marriages, ranging from personal

to political, economic to social; however, rise in gender-based violence cases and increase in family division are the crucial and major consequences of forced marriages.

The abhorrent approach of forced marriage dates back to pre-enlightenment era when women were considered as slaves, second-class citizens and subservient to their male counterparts. However, with the passage of time and after adoption of liberal values, many civilised societies abrogated and criminalised this practice. Notably, in sub-saharan regions and in many regions of asia, the forced marriages are (largely) accepted and recognised in socities. Hence the forced marriage sometimes impacts beyond the personal level, and affecting the values of entire society.

There are multivariate causes of the forced marriages that compounded the plight of women. Fust and foremost, peer-pressure in tribal environment pushes and instigates the ignarant ~~pre~~ parents to give away their daughter in marriage. This pressure serves as immense and significant ~~pressure~~ social stigma and traditional taboos in rural and remote areas of Pakistan. According to the report "status of Rural women in Pakistan" only about 1.35% of rural women report having any say in "when or whom" they will marry. This report highlights the startling facts and paints a grim picture of women liberties in Pakistan. Therefore, it goes beyond the contention that rising peer-pressure in tribal environment coupled with institutionalized patriarchy serve as the instrumental cause of forced marriage.

Furthermore, the deteriorating socio-economic conditions have catalyzed the rates of forced marriages. In low or middle-income households, forced marriages are broadly considered as normal phenomenon. As the rate of poverty increases, it creates a cascading effect to surge the number of forced marriages. The socio-economic indicators including Human Development Index (HDI) signals the well-being of people. UNICEF report extends the idea that the trend of forced marriage has been higher among poor and illiterate families. This report reinforced the notion that declining socio-economic indicators have stimulated the forced marriages in Pakistan.

Pakistan is situated as frontline state against climate change and ranks at 5th number in climate vulnerabilities. Frequent and intensified climate

catastrophes have disproportionately affected the women. During extreme weather events, women are more inclined and exposed to domestic violence, forced marriages and illicit sexual activities. From commodification of women to forced marriage, climate ~~change~~ events expotentially increase the susceptibility of violence against women. After the unprecedented floods in 2022, more than 18% increase in child marriages in calamity-hit district. The climate-deiven economic insecurity trigger forced marriages especially among girl child. Hence, it is evident that severe climate events disproportionately affects the women and results in forced marriages.

Despite the explicit warning enshrined in "Surah Nisa" of Holy Quraan and multiple cautions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), ~~multiple~~ numerous Islamic scholars always employed narrow interpretation of

Islamic jurisprudence which have potenially sidelined the principle of Mutual concept. Almost all different school of thaught converged and agreed upon the fact that ~~this~~ is forced marriage is void marriage. Marriage is a civil contract and without the ~~mutual~~ free consent of either party- male or female- will not constitute or amount to legal marriage. However, some schdars vehementlly endorsed the idea of child marriage which is widely seen as forced marriage. Therefore, shallow and erroneous interpretation of Islamic Laws broadly permits the forced marriages.

In the traditional and patriarchal societies, male child percieved as social security whereas female as a economic burden. Pakistan as a patriarchal and middle-income country significantly observed this phenomenon. Despite numerous social security programs

are initiated such as Ehsaas Stipends to educate the females and free vocational training to make women more progressed, skilled and independent. However, these initiatives have hardly changed the fate of women in Pakistan. All gender-mainstreaming projects produce a ~~negligible~~ marginal impacts on the misogynistic and patriarchal society of Pakistan. Hence, it is apparent that the very patriarchal and ~~an~~ myopic perceivation of women in society has served as a reason of forced marriage.

In addition to that lack of robust mechanism to implement the legal framework remain a key factor behind forced marriages. The ~~cumbersome~~ litigation procedure without gender responsiveness have further compounded the issue. Numerous reasons eroded the public trust on judicial system and discouraged

the female to pursue protracted litigation. First, low conviction rates in gender-based violence cases. Second, lack of separate tribunals with trained and specialized staff. Third, embedded misogynistic and patriarchal trends in system. Due to these factor multiple legislation are formulated including child marriage restraint acts and major amendments in Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) to eliminalize forced marriage in every form and manifestation. However, lack of robust legal mechanism, these laws failed to produce intended results.

Lastly, lack of education and adequate awareness regarding forced marriages at public at large also presents as major hurdles against the issue. Numerous Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are in collaboration with government institution to take comprehensive and concrete actions against

the forced marriage but hardly achieved the progress. Mass awareness projects through mainstream media and social media are significant to highlight the plight of women. Educating societies and spreading awareness will serve a major catalyst against forced marriage. In rural areas, lack of education and awareness manifest in commodification of women such as **Bride Pricing**, which breeds a cycle of violence against women. Therefore, it is undeniable fact that lack of awareness and education can also leads to forced marriages.

The paradox of forced marriages leaves unforeseen consequences in Pakistan. Forced wedlock are often witnessed a increased stratification and division in families. This concept of surge in bitterness and hate ~~destroy~~ serve as catalyst to destroy families and marriage institutions.

In forced marriages women are often denied to their legal shares in property and basic rights, spanning from personal to social rights. Without the cohesion and unity in family, it is arduous for a couple to remain in contractual obligation of marriage. In Pakistan, women are compelled to remain, in ~~abusive~~ abusive marriages. Hence forced marriages can contribute to stratification and division in family.

Rising incidents of domestic violence against women particularly married women highlights the cycles of violence against women in Pakistan. In forced marriage, male counterparts often exercised unrestrained and absolute powers to control the women. However, the slight disagreement from women side shake so-called male-ego and results in perpetuated cycles of violence against women. Numerous

husbands allegedly level baseless allegations on their wifes to justify their ~~illicit~~ illicit actions of vidence, ranging from physical to mental. Therefore, it goes beyond the iota of doubt that rising incidents of domestic violence are also stemmed from forced massiages.

In addition to that the sudden surge in divorce rates and dissolution of massiage paints a grim picture. ~~First~~ In Pakistan's traditional society, numerous social stigma and outdated stereotypes centered ~~ab~~ around divorced women. Second, the separation between parents disproportionately affected the social learning of a child. Third, after separation, the legal battle for the custody of a child also serves a hectic and difficult exercise. Therefore, in case of separation, the social learning of a child and social - well being of a

mother. In multiple times, children who witnessed the forced marriages and separation often develop psychological trauma, depression and even suicidal tendencies. Hence the well-being of child and women remained more exposed or vulnerable to the separation.

Lastly, in numerous cases, young girls in forced marriage are likely or vulnerable to sexual exploitation or trafficking. In forced marriages, women are treated as commodities rather than partners. Many victims are compelled to bear children without their consent, turning their bodies into instrument for lineage. Moreover, women are frequently trafficked to foreign lands under the pretext of marriage — a forced marriage. Therefore, it undeniable fact that forced marriages breeds a vicious

cycles of legal rights violation. Subsequently, when consent is absent, it creates space for control, coercion and deception.

In a nutshell, forced marriage in Pakistan have perpetuated the vicious cycles of violence. From acid attacks to compel women to marry to forcibly abductions, from bride pricing to women as assets of compensation, women in Pakistan endured harsh and abhorrent violations of their rights. Institutionalized patriarchy with entrenched misogynistic trend often considered female counterparts as their sub-servient. With declining the socio-economic indicators, women are more exposed to forced marriages. Meanwhile, climate events have further compounded the plight of women and push them in the quagmire of forced marriage. Myopic and erroneous interpretation of divine laws

is employed to ignore the principle of free consent and to justify the violence against women. Moreover, there are numerous unforeseen consequences of forced marriages, extending from personal to social. In forced marriages, frequent conflicts and quarrels can pose potential perils to family and marriage institution. Rising incidents of domestic violence also serve a major signal of forced marriage. It also affect the well-being of children and mother. Therefore, with a rising awareness and following the foot steps of our elders, who highlighted the role of women in society, Pakistan will curb this menace of forced marriages.