

TOPIC: FORCED MARRIAGES IN PAKISTAN: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OUTLINE

1) INTRODUCTION

2) Thesis Statement:

~~Pakistan~~ Pakistan is a country that harbours a closed culture. In many aspects people do not have much of a choice but to follow the culture, one of which is marriage. Due to strict norms and strong kinship, people are forced to tie a knot against their will which have social, economical and psychological impacts, ~~which~~ ^{that} need to be addressed formally and informally.

3) CRUNCH PARAGRAPH

4) CAUSES OF FORCED MARRIAGES IN PAKISTAN.

- a) Closed society system of Pakistan
- b) No marriages outside the caste are allowed
- c) Family pressurises the individuals to marry according to their choice
- d) People are forced to marry to protect the family honour.

e) Child marriages and early engagement culture.

5) CONSEQUENCES OF FORCED MARRIAGES IN PAKISTAN

a) Domestic violence becomes spiked in the society.

b) Depression is prevalent in the society

c) Divorce rates are surging

d) Incrementing suicide rates

e) Children bear the brunt of the unstable or broken families.

6) WAY FORWARD TO THE EPIDEMIC OF FORCED MARRIAGE

a) Allow the culture to become flexible (awareness through media)

b) Break the custom of in-family marriages

c) Stop sacrificing women to protect family honour and settle disputes. (public protests against the cause)

d) Children should not be promised to marry someone until they become adults (formulating stringent laws against it)

7) CONCLUSION

The famous political philosopher Rousseau once said that A man is born free but everywhere he is in chains. In Pakistan the biggest chains of a free man is forced marriage. It not only affects women but also men. In a closed cultured society of Pakistan free will is very seldom accepted. When a person stands for his point of view, he is labelled as a rebel. Same goes regarding the issue of marriages in Pakistan. Due to the ethnocentric culture of Pakistan people do not let a western culture of choice in selecting a partner become rampant. Due to stringent norms of the society the family pressurises the young people to marry within the same caste even if they like an outcast. In order to preserve kinship daughters are promised to young boys ^{even} before they ~~even~~ hit puberty. Moreover, when a dispute sparks between two families, the women are utilised as a lamb to be sacrificed to restore peace.

This is an alarming social problem as it is harming the society instead of healing it. When a person is forced into a wedlock with a person they don't like then with a passage of time men become frustrated with them and start hitting the women in the house. Due to prolonged domestic violence and hatred for the partner, both men and women fall into depression. When the suffering becomes unbearable then either a person breaks (suicide) or the marriage breaks (divorce). Ultimately the children bear the brunt of the broken families and the vicious cycle of trauma continues in the society. But, for a growing and progressive society it is important to start a campaign to raise awareness about the dire consequences of this social phenomenon. People of Pakistan must be given awareness through social media and entertainment industry regarding the consequences of forced marriages. The families should stop making it an obligation that a person can only marry another who is from

the same caste or family. Furthermore the public need powerful protests against the use of women as a source of dispute resolution because they are not objects but real human individuals. Stringent laws must be formulated and implemented against child marriages, so they don't have to stick with a partner that they don't like. Hence, Pakistan is a closed culture and in many aspects people don't have options to proceed in life. One of them is marriage. Due to strict norms people tie a knot against their will which have social, economical and psychological impacts that need to be addressed formally and informally.

Pakistan is a country where family ties and kinship are the ends. To protect the means the people justify every end. Even if that means to sacrifice their children's happiness. People sometimes have their children committed at a very young age to prevent them

from finding someone else when they grow up. But this thought has become outdated now. Due to increasing enrollment of children in educational institutions the socialisation is rising. Due to which people set their standards which they perceive in their partner. When they get married to people who do not fulfill their requirements then they start to express that in different forms. Men start to beat their wives and the wife either falls into depression or commits suicide. This phenomenon of forced marriages is slowly turning into a social hazard. Due to which people are becoming stone hearted and less sensitive towards humanity. Moreover, constant stress and dissatisfaction causes a person to lose interest in life. Their productivity declines and the economic conditions keep on worsening till there is nothing left.

There are multiple causes of this social curse. A few of them are discussed below.

First of all, Pakistan is a closed cultured nation. People do not accept changes in their culture easily. In their culture, parents have the choice of selecting a partner for their children as they know better. For example, in the drama ^{Bin Feroz} ~~Bin Feroz~~ Meerub was forced to marry Murtasim when both of them hated each other.

It was because the family thought that it was best for the both of them. It created animosity for them towards each other and they remained unhappy in their relations.

Hence, due to closed culture practices of Pakistan the parents or the adults of the family force the children to marry against their will which ruins their relationship.

Moreover, the culture of Pakistan prefers that the children get married in the same family

or the same caste. They consider it bad to marry outside their families or castes. This is because they believe that tying the knot in the same caste or family strengthens the kinship system. For example, in the movie "Bol", Ayesha liked Mustafa. But since he was not a Syed, Ayesha's father did not let her marry ~~him~~ Mustafa. Ayesha's father wanted to force her to marry a Syed man, however bad he may be. Hence, in order to strengthen bonds and kinship, people in Pakistan are forced to marry in the family or in the same caste, even if they like someone else.

Furthermore, due to hard nature of Pakistani men, many disputes arise and women are used as a tool to resolve disputes. In many tribal areas of Pakistan when a family kills someone then a woman is given to the family who suffered the loss.

In the drama "Mere Hammasheem" Khajista's father was killed and to compensate that her cousin, the Khan, was given a woman from the by the killer's family to settle the dispute. Hence, women are forced to marry into a rival family in order to protect the family from further bloodshed.

Additionally, families ~~not~~ promise the wedding of their children at a young age. When they grow up their preferences change.

They might end up admiring someone else and wish to marry them. But in the end the family wins. The children are married at the young age from the fear that the rebellion gets stronger with time and must be crushed ~~at~~ when it's weak.

For example in the drama "Mayi Ri" the girl and the boy are married when they ~~are~~ are in school even though the boy loves someone else. They

maintain the relation forcefully even though their personalities are two worlds apart. So, the parents force children to marry at a young age and pressurise them to maintain the relationship to suppress the rebellion at a very young age in Pakistan.

All of the above mentioned reasons of forced marriages have consequences as it is the law of nature that every action has an equal but opposite reaction.

First of all, domestic violence becomes a common phenomenon in the forced marriages of Pakistan. When men are not satisfied with the women that they like then they get frustrated. They show their frustration in the form of violence towards their partners because they have animosity towards them for ruining their life. Hence, forced marriages in Pakistan have made the phenomenon of domestic

violence rampant in the society.

Secondly, when two people are forced into an intimate relation then they fail to understand each other which leads to depression and discontentment. In a marriage love and passion are essential that comes with the understanding in the relationship. When two people who hate each other or are bound to each other in a relationship resulting from a settlement of bloodshed, the sacred bond of intimacy becomes a source of depression. For example, in the drama "Mere Hamraheem" the Khan is forced to marry a girl who comes from a family who that killed his uncle. Whenever the man sees his wife, he saw blood. They failed to create intimacy and in the course of years they fall into depression. Hence, forced marriages in Pakistan are spiking the rates of depression.

Prolonged depression ~~is~~ mostly results in a dire consequence of suicide. In Pakistan, due to lack of intimacy in the forced marriages and conflicting personalities, one of the two people turn towards taking their own life. For example in the community of Agha Khan, the women opted to cash the opportunities of education and attained their qualifications of Masters degree. While the men dropped out at the primary level. The refined and well educated women had no option but to marry truck drivers. The result was obvious. The suicide rates of women incremented to a great extent. Hence, forced marriages ~~of~~ in Pakistan lead to a surge in the suicide rates.

Many people who do not reach to the extent of suicide decide that divorce is

a better option when there is no hope of love in a marriage. So in Pakistan, the divorce rates are adding up quickly. For example in the drama "Mayi Ki", the boy and the girl end up splitting up because the forced marriage had no hope left to be saved. Hence, the divorce rates in Pakistan are spiking due to forced marriages.

Either the person breaks or the relationship breaks, the children suffer the consequence of forced marriages. When a family breaks the children suffer a lot. They don't understand why their parents don't live together when their friend's parents are under the same roof and are happy. Moreover, the frequent visit to alternate families make them confused about what norms to follow.

They become isolated from the society due to lack of confidence. When they grow up they also fail to create intimacy with their forced partner and the vicious cycle continues. Hence, children bear the brunt of broken families and continue the vicious cycle of trauma as a result of forced marriages in Pakistan.

But God made humans a rational being. They are bound to face problems as a test of life. They have to find remedies to the problems in order to progress in life.

Media should be utilised as a potent tool to create awareness about the consequences of forced marriages and give a message to have flexibility in the culture to

control the impacts. In this case many Pakistani dramas address this issues such as Mayi Ri, Mehtammasheen and Suno Chanda etc. Hence, media of Pakistan can be utilised to create awareness and stop the negative impacts of forced marriages.

Furthermore, religious scholars must step in and educate people that religion does not bound people against their will and force people to marry within the family. Our beloved and most respectable Prophet-(PBUH) was married to Hazrat Khadija (R.A) because Hazrat Khadija (R.A) sent a proposal. Moreover, Nikah is only valid when both the girl show their consent happily. Hence, Pakistani religious scholars must up their game against forced marriage to preserve the sacred

and the most loved relation in the eyes of Allah.

Furthermore, peaceful and powerful protest must make it to formal and informal media to raise their voices against using women as a tool of dispute resolution in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The Aurat March rally can be potentially utilised for such a cause. This will create solidarity among the nation to fight the cause and protect Pakistani people from the dire effects of forced marriages. Hence, power shows and rallies must gain solidarity to end the vicious cycle of sacrificing women to resolve disputes.

Lastly, stringent laws must be formulated by the Pakistani government to prevent child marriages and juvenile engagements as

children develop with time and change their preferences. Children must reach to an adult age of eighteen before they can be bound into an eternal relationship to promote healthy and progressive lifestyles. Hence, the government of Pakistan should bar child marriages and engagements to prevent unrest in the society.

Conclusively, forced marriages ^{is} ~~are~~ a big social problem in Pakistan because of the closed cultured ~~phono~~ society of Pakistan. Since family is an institute of social control they force their children to comply to the tradition and coerce them into marriages that are not healthy for them. It is because sometimes these marriages are focused to strengthen familial ties or to resolve the disputes among the families as it is visibly seen in the Pashtun culture. Even children are not-

spared from it. This epidemic has dire consequences that are visible in the form of increasing domestic violence which leads to depression among women. Discontentment in marriages have negative mental health effects on both the husband and the wife. This is leading to a surge in the wave of suicide and divorce rates. Because in forced marriages either the people break or the relation in the end, the children suffer and the vicious cycle continues. For resolving such a problem media must be utilised to raise awareness against the social problem. The Islamic clerics must educate people regarding the consent of people in marriages. Aurat March should be promoted to raise voice against trading women for peace and to protect children from getting married.

prior to puberty or a rape age
through stringent law. This
will help to create a healthy
society and preserve the sanctity
of the relation that is most
loved by our Allah Almighty.