

ESSAY MOCK 4

Date: _____ 20 _____

TOPIC: Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes & Consequences

Outline

1- Introduction

Thesis statement: While forced marriages in Pakistan are often justified through cultural culture, patriarchal norms and economic necessity, but leads to psychological trauma, social inequality and violation of fundamental human rights.

2- Causes of Forced Marriages

i- Cultural and Traditional practices

a- Marriages are arranged to maintain alliances and strengthen family ties in rural parts of the country.

b- Traditions like Vani or Swara practised today to resolve conflicts or as a compensation for the crimes committed by the males of the family -

c- Cousin or intra-family marriages to preserve property and family purity.

ii- Economic factors

a- families often marry off their young girl girls to reduce the financial burden

b- It is also viewed as a financial transaction, either to get dowry or settle the debts

iii- Social and family pressure

a- Fear of love marriages, viewed as a disobedience to stop this marriages are forced -

b- Families fear stigma if a girl remains unmarried

iv- Lack of Awareness and legal Enforcement

a- Illiteracy and lack of education encourages forced marriages

b- Weak law enforcement allow this practice to continue -

c- limited access to justice

v. Patriarchal Norms.

- a - Male dominance in decision making
- b - Gender inequality encourages forced unions -
- c - Preference of male child over female child.

3- Consequences of the forced Marriages.

i- Psychological and mental health impacts

- a- Victims suffer from anxiety and depression due to lack of consent and emotional isolation.
- b- loss of self esteem and identity mainly in the case of women -
- c- In extreme situation, victims may attempt suicide.

ii- Social consequences

- a- Domestic violence increase due to lack of consent and compatibility -
- b- Social isolation to cut off the support of the victim -

iii- Impact on education and economic empowerment.

- a- Girls often forced to leave education to take care of the family.
- b- ^{financial} Dependence on the spouse or in-laws increase
- c- Trapped in poverty due to lack of education and opportunity.

iv- Health Issues faced by the victims.

- a- Early pregnancies lead to reproductive health complications.
- b- Chronic stress leads to long-term physical illnesses.

v- Legal and human Rights Impact-

- a- limited access to justice due to fear of social stigma.
- b- Violation of human Rights and freedom of choice.

4- Way forward.

- a- Strict implementation of marriage and women protection laws.
- b- Public awareness campaigns.
- c- Engagement of community and religious leaders to challenge cultural pressures.
- d- Support systems, shelter homes and counselling for victims.

5- Conclusion.

The ESSAY

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"I thought, I will get lipstick, money and gifts" says a 13 year old Saira while cradling her newborn baby. "But I was married off to an older man". This is the story of every other girl child, young women of Pakistan who belongs to the rural parts of the country.

"Marriage should be matter of choice, not coercion" (UN Women, 2018). That is not the case with women in Pakistan, as forced marriages are highly practised and encouraged in the country. While it is mainly justified through the cultural and traditional practices, patriarchal norms, economic necessity, social and family pressure and lack of awareness and legal enforcement. Although the victims of such practices are both male and female but at the suffering end are only the women, and the consequences such as mental health and psychological impacts, social factors, health issues, education and economic empowerment, legal and human rights are all borne by women only and on the other hand - the men continue to live their lives the way they prefer.

The, 2016 Express Tribune article of 13 people arrested for the forced marriage of an eight year old girl to settle a family dispute, this directly links to the traditional and cultural practices such as Swaro or Vani in which women are given in marriages to resolve the disputes. Also, that women are forced into marriage to strengthen the family ties and to maintain alliances that may support in the political or social image, cousin or intra-family marriages are one of its examples, they are done to preserve the property and to maintain the family purity.

During the 2022 mass floods in Sindh, around 26 girls of the same village were married of age younger than 18. This explains that ~~mar~~ forced marriages are also encouraged because of the economic challenges. In this particular situations people lost huge valuables, those living in poverty are more forced deeper into it so the solution to reduce the burden or to pay off the debts people find is marrying off their young girls. As, girls are still a liability on the family in many parts of the country so to get rid of the dowry, they marry them off and also some families buy the bride

Moving on, Unmarried girls or women who are not married and remain unmarried forever are not much valued and respected in the society. So, the family pressure and social criticism leads to forced and unmatched marriages. It also includes the fear of love marriages, these marriages are still not appreciated and families reject such relationships and as a punishment women are forced to marry someone else. Love marriages are still ~~considered~~ taken as a disobedience from the girls or women. So, to keep the control and for the family honor they are pressurized into such unions.

Another cause is Illiteracy and lack of awareness. Due to high rate of illiteracy, people are not aware about their basic human rights and legal laws and actions ~~of the~~ against these type of practices. Also, women lacks support and ~~sex~~ education to fight against such ~~behar~~ treatments, that is why these marriages continue to happen. Further fuel is late justice and law enforcement in many rural areas, that becomes a barrier in women seeking legal help and fight for their justice.