

Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes & Consequences

Outline

1. Introduction:

- 1- Hook
- 2- Building statements
- 3- Thesis statement

2. Causes of Forced Marriages in Pakistan:

1- Society & Traditions;

- (a) Offsprings' subordination,
- (b) Wata - Shatta (exchange marriages),
- (c) Social Pressures (specially on girls)

2- Psychological Barriers;

- (a) Parental and controlling psychology
- (b) Fear or Jealousy of Parents.

3- Poverty;

- (a) Girls are sold in the name of marriage for money
- (b) Parents prefer rich instead of poor

4- Feudal & Tribal Culture;

- (a) Vani / Swara (girls to settle disputes) &
- (b) Property Disputes
- (c) Patriarchal Norms

3. Consequences of Forced Marriages:

1- Failed and Broken Marriages;

- ① Increased ratio of divorce
- ② Poor marital relationship
- ③ Psychological Trauma
- ④ Domestic Violence
- ⑤ Resistance and deviance

2- Social Isolation;

- ① Cut off from family, friends and community support

3- Children's Suffering;

- ① Bad or abnormal upbringing of children results in children's social & psychological trouble / pain

4. Suggestions to Minimize Forced Marriages;

awareness and education; strict law enforcement; community engagement; media & advocacy campaigns.

5. Conclusion.

Concluding statements.

Thesis restated.

The Essay

What happens when the word 'Yes' in marriage isn't spoken from heart but forced from fear?

Dur-e-Maknoon is an innocent character of a famous novelist Umere Ahmed who chose suicide instead of getting bind into a marriage forced upon her — and the readers were shocked that how could our society be so ~~be~~ cruel. This is not a ^{only} novelistic picture but a ^{factual} case which portrays real face of Pakistani society.

~~There are many cases like Dur-e-Maknoon~~
In many parts of Pakistan, specifically rural areas, marriage is not a choice but a command — a social contract where consent is often the missing signature. According to the Human Rights commission of Pakistan, hundreds of girls are forced into marriage every year — many before they even reach adulthood. The causes of forced marriages in Pakistan are diverse entangling into social biases and psychological dilemmas. — include societal values and traditions, stereotypical and anti-modern approach to real life and conducts, poverty, property disputes and feudal culture. These ~~caused~~ causes have their implications

in the form of broken or fated marriages, social isolation and child suffer. This essay highlights the ~~grave~~ causes of forced marriages in Pakistan, and their consequences along with suggesting suitable measures to minimize the forced marriage culture in Pakistan.

The Causes of forced marriage in Pakistan are diverse; one of them is social traditions. In Pakistan, people are servants of their values and traditions more than their personal choice. A good tradition is children's subordination to their parents. Not only the girls but also boys suffer from this. The children require to marry whoever their parents* choose for them. Another tradition which reinforces forced marriage is "Watta Satta" (exchange marriages). The culture of watta satta is so common in Pakistan where the marriages are settled ^{only} to accomplish social responsibility. Exchanged marriages are grave in sense of their interdependence.

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if one marriage spoils, the other party cannot escape its consequences. Moreover, there is a social pressure specially on girls in the name of society and traditions. Parents often fear that their girls will be left unmarried and they will be answerable to society. Similarly girls ^{are} also afraid about the implications of being single for the lifetime which enforces them to ~~accept~~ ^{accept} forced marriage.

Another main cause of forced marriage is Parental psychology. In the societies like Pakistan, the lives of the children are controlled by their parents in majority cases. Mothers are responsible for most of the decisions being taken for their offspring. Hence, they are not ready to loose this control and prefer forced marriage ~~re~~ instead of love marriages. Besides, in most of the cases, mothers fears ~~that~~ if the woman coming in the life of her son will become more beloved to him which

her controlling nature cannot tolerate. Thus, the psychological barriers including controlling behavior and jealousy tantrums becomes the root cause of forced marriages.

Poverty is also an important factor to contribute in forced marriages.

Families marry off daughters early to reduce financial burden or gain bride price. Moreover, In a

country like Pakistan where nearly 45 percent population lives below the poverty line (world bank), people use girls marriages as a means of income.

• In many areas of Pakistan, girls are sold in the name of marriages to wealthy people in replacement of money. An example to this is portrayed in Jamal Abro's short story 'Pirani' also which ~~dep~~ writes how a little girl of 7 years was sold to an old man for a little money. Furthermore, due to the bleak picture of poverty people have been suffering from, ^{poor} parents often prefer old

rich men for their daughters rather than young but poor ~~ga~~ boys — which is a grave case of forced marriages.

Besides all these causes, feudal culture is a crucial ~~part~~ element of forced marriages. Also in tribal areas like Balochistan, forced marriages are reinforced behind their socio cultural stereotypes. There are the rituals like vani/swara where girls are given to settle disputes between the clans. Pakistani media frequently depicts the relevant cases through news channels and entertainment channels where boys/girls suffer the consequences of family clashes in the form of forced marriages. Moreover, forced marriage culture is also common in feudal lords to save inheritance. Most of the — marriages are conducted abnormally — for example with a huge age difference or other abnormal factors — within the family to keep the property within the clan.

finally, the patriarchal mindset of Pakistani society is a cause of forced marriage. The male dominated culture keeps control on women's choice in the name of honor and authority. Women's conducts are linked with the respect of men, they're not allowed for love marriages, instead, coerced for forced marriage no matter how intolerable the relationship for women is supposed to be.

Forced marriages, caused by multiple reasons including those we discussed, face severe consequences. One of these troublesome consequences is failed or broken marriages. This includes an increased ratio of divorce. A 2022 Gallup Pakistan survey indicated that 48% of Pakistanis believe the divorce rate has increased over the past decade. The Express Tribune reports a 35% increase in divorce rates in Punjab over the past five years; while Rawalpindi's family courts saw a record number of new family cases in the first half of 2025, with 4,980 new cases filed. This is the status of divorce, ~~Other than divorce~~ Besides this, failed marriages, if not divorced, result in 'long-term

poor marital relationship with lack of mutual understanding and affection — which crucial to live a long happy life. Unstable relationship, in most cases, leads to psychological trauma where victims often face depression, anxiety and long-term emotional distress along with ^{inspired} health issues. There are several examples to quote as a forced marriage. A similar case was reported in 'The News' where a young man attempted suicide after ^{suffering from} long-term anxiety attacks. The reason of depression was mentioned as unstable relationships with the wife. The boy loved someone else but due to the family or mother's pressure, agreed to get married to the mother's chosen mistress. The relationship began with domestic violence and of man to his wife culminated in panic attacks and finally the suicide attempt. Moreover,

————— A forced marriage also results in resistance and deviance. Girls, when do not find a way out for themselves, they deviate and stand against the cultural norms. Many a cases report unlawful and immoral extra marital affairs and women's run off from their homes ————— a gloomy picture captured out of forced marriages.

Another cost of forced marriage is the social isolation. Bound in an unwanted relationship of marriage, is enough for a person to suffer social isolation. In case of divorce, this isolation increases because divorce in Pakistani society is a kind of deviant behavior which the society doesn't support. As a result, divorced people are cut off from family, friends and community unions. Besides, the social isolation doesn't come alone; it brings psychological and health issues ^{strain} also. According to Merton's theory, social isolation is a key factor towards criminal tendency, hence, it can trigger criminal behaviors in the people as well.

The unstable relationship originates between two partners due to forced marriage cause the worst damage to their children. Conflicts and arguments of the family affects children's upbringing

causing them social and psychological pain trouble. They become weak members of society in relation to their social conducts and intelligence.

~~Environmental and social abilities cannot~~ The children who suffer parental issues, lack of care and love from the family are frequently reported, according to research studies, showing low intelligence, barriers in understanding simple things, low confidence, inability to mingle and speak in communities,

unable to make friends and low self esteem.

Some reports show them being low tempered & aggressive and resilient while

several theorists believe a fine deviant tendency in them. It is a harsh truth that forced marriages

is one of the root cause of many destroyed personalities and minds in Pakistani society. A relevant case study is the life of Doctor Faraz - a renowned psychologist who appeared normal in front of the world but in fact was a psychopath. He used to buy dolls and ^{them} burned and tortured

tortured them. The reason mentioned behind his barbarism was his parents' failed marriage in his mother's over influence of her single life on him.

~~Forced marriages~~ are ruining factor of Pakistan's society and remains a serious violation of human rights. To minimize forced marriages in Pakistan

To minimize forced marriages in Pakistan, a multi-dimensional approach is required. First, education and awareness campaigns should be promoted to inform people about the importance of consent and the legal rights of women. The government must strictly implement laws such as the Prevention of Anti-women Practices Act 2011 and punish those who violate them. Religious scholars and community elders should be engaged to discourage harmful traditions like *vani* and *watta satta*. Education, skill development and employment can help people get independence and resist coercion. ^{Later} Media and civil society should play an active role

in changing public attitudes. ~~Finally~~,

In conclusion, forced marriages in Pakistan remain a ruining factor to the society and a serious violation of human rights, rooted in cultural traditions, poverty, and other societal and psychological issues which result in vulnerable consequences. To combat this issue education, awareness and strict law enforcement must go hand in hand. Community participation, and effective implementation of protective laws can gradually eliminate this practice. Only when each marriage is based on free will and mutual consent can society ensure justice and dignity for all.