

Forced Marriages in Pakistan: causes and Consequences

I Introduction:-

- UN described forced marriages as violation of human rights
- violation of consent disguised as a cultural duty.

Thesis Statement:

In Pakistan, forced marriages stem from cultural rigidity, social pressure and economic insecurity which instigate grave economical, psychological, legal and moral consequences.

II Understanding the concept "Forced marriage"

- Marriage conducted without free, informed consent of either party.

III Causes of Forced marriages:

a) Cultural and Traditional Factors:-

- concept of Walita - sala in tribes
- concept of Vani
- concept of family's honor protection
- Resistance to modern values

b) Social Factors:-

- Patriarchal society system
- obedience expectations
- societal pressure
- caste system

c) Economic and class Pressures:

- Poverty and inflation
- Dowry Pressure
- Early marriages seen as relief from economic burdens

d) Religious Misinterpretation:

- Islamic teaching's seen as consent ignored
- Local clerics sanctify non-consensual marriages

e) Weak legal Implementation:

- Law exists but enforcement remains weak
- Prohibited under Pakistan's Penal code 498B
- Jirgas and Panchayat influence.

④ Grave consequences of Forced marriages;

a) Psychological and emotional Impact:

- Depression cases enhancement
- sense of imprisonment and slavery
- long term trauma leading to emotional decay

b) Social and Familial Perspective;

- Increased Domestic violence
- Marital instability
- children raised in toxic environments
- Personalities distortion

- generational trauma resulted

example:

NGOs reports 70% of survivors experience long term trauma

(c) Educational and Economic Repercussions

- terminates further education
- Vicious cycle of dependency
- Poverty engrained

(d) legal and Human rights violations

- Violation of UNCRC
- Undermines constitutional right to liberty (Ar-14)

(e) cultural and moral decline

- Honor of family preferred over humanity
- self respect distortion
- Global image distortion
- Societies silence strengthened.

⑤ Way Forward; How to avoid this moral declination?

- Strengthen enforcement of anti-forced marriage laws
- Awareness campaigns for basic human rights
- Clarifying religious Perspectives
- Strengthening education in lower and deprived areas
- Economic support programs.

⑥

Conclusion.

"She was married before she was able to write her name"

For thousands of girls in Pakistan, this is not a mere sentence but their whole life story. There are many families who decide their daughter's future before its birth. In the dim light of culture and traditions for the sake of family honor, their lives are sealed. Forced marriage is such an unjustified custom that has prevailed in the societies and is strengthening as the days pass. It is a severe violation of human rights usually justified on the basis of cultural duty and religious beliefs. Other social factors like patriarchal domination, caste system concept and societal pressure also strengthen its roots in the society. It is justified sometimes in the name of honour and poverty while in truth it is a clear misinterpretation of Islamic beliefs and violation of human rights. Despite legal prohibitions and awareness campaigns, it continues to thrive in economically backward regions. However, it is visible from its severe consequences that it is a death of morality. Victims and families involved face grave consequences in the form of psychological trauma, moral degradation, marital abuse and personality distortion. Indeed, there are a number of ways

which are being implemented and needs more to focus on to end this customary dedication of morality. By enforcing legal frameworks, education promotions and clarifying religious perspective about marriage, it can be made sure to eradicate or reduce the rate of force marriages in Pakistan.

A forced marriage is the one where either of party is forced or coerced to get into marital relation without consent often under emotion or physical pressure. Islam upholds the principle of consent of will and focused on the consensual marriages but this principle is ~~seen~~ misinterpreted in many ways. In Practice, Institution of marriage is frequently exploited to maintain male dominance, family's honour and to settle disputes. Pakistan's Penal code Section 498-B and Child marriage Restraint Act criminalize these force union yet weak implementation make it ineffective.

The roots of force marriage lie in Pakistan's patriarchal and feudal traditions. Custom like, watta satta, vani and resistance to modernity enforced this immoral happenings in tribal areas. The fake notion of "family honour" restricts women choices. Even the whole society is silenced to these acts. These customs have been strengthened

immediately with full force. According to Human rights commission of Pakistan, hundreds of such cases surface annually, yet thousands remain unreported due to social stigma.

Poverty and economic insecurity further perpetuate this social crime. In many family daughters are seen as economic burdens and married off early to relieve household pressure. The dowry system and lack of education strengthened this notion. UNICEF reports illustrate that women being married before the age of 18, often without consent.

Religious misinterpretations also play a role; cult cultural practices are wrongly labeled as Islamic obligations. The council of Islamic ideology has repeatedly clarified that Islam strictly forbids forced marriages, yet local clerics and elders, while making self made interpretations, justifies this immoral act in the name of Islam.

While Pakistan has made progress in law making, enforcement remain weak. The anti-Women Protection Act (2011) criminalizes forced marriage, but jirga and panchayats continue to impose them with impunity. Law

enforcement officers often treat such matters as "family disputes" rather than crimes. The lack of women-friendly courts, shelter homes and legal aid prevents victims from seeking justice. Consequently cultural justice wins over legal rights.

The scars of forced marriages are not just physical but deeply rooted affecting mental health of victim and impacting families. People involved suffer from depression, trauma, anxiety and stress. Many women describe life as "living prisons". The emotional alienation and loss of identity caused by coercive unions often lead to lifelong trauma affecting generations. Hence, forced marriage strengthens psychological death of humans.

Force marriages abruptly end a girl's education, cutting off opportunities for empowerment. Early motherhood and household responsibilities replace schooling and career dreams. A UNICEF study shows that girls married before 18 are 50 percent less likely to complete secondary education. This strengthens a cycle of dependency and poverty where women remain economically repressed and submissive. Hence, it enforces gender inequality.

At the societal level, forced marriages perpetuates domestic violence, marital instability and generational trauma. Families experienced social distress and children growing in this toxic environment, fall a prey to personality disorders. The normalization of violence further strengthen moral decline and strengthen cultural obedience. It shapes generations minds to be enslaved to the customs and followed no matter what happen. In essence, this practice erodes the moral foundation of a society replacing justice with silence.

On the global stage, this custom distorts country's image worldwide. Cases highlights represents severe violation of human right grabbing world's attention and portraying Pakistan negatively. They contravene international commitments under the convention on the Rights of child and Human rights convention. Human rights organizations and NGOs continue to call for Pakistan's accountability urging stronger implementation of laws and promoting awareness.

Strengthening of these practices also undermine constitutional sovereignty of Pakistan. Hence, strong enforcement of laws and legal imprisonment of culprits is required.

regulation of religious practices and
enforcement of laws. Religious
practices must be emphasized and
emphasized on human dignity and respect.
Religious scholars must clarify
misunderstands and local clerics must be
captured for false interpretations.
Media can also play a vital role in
creating awareness campaigns and
empowering societal economic empowerment.

Gender inequality is a major obstacle
to achieving sustainable development.

Gender inequality is a major obstacle
to achieving sustainable and progress
society.

Forced marriage is neither a
religion act nor a compulsory obligation.
It is just a immoral custom that
has prevailed long in the societies.
It is just a coercion masked as
duty and obligation. It reveals
a society's failure to tackle
these practices even in this
modern world of twenty first

century. The persistence of such customs reflects Pakistan's ongoing struggle between tradition and justice. Real progress lies not in preserving oppressive customs but liberating humanity from them. Pakistan's governance needs to focus on strengthening legal implications and policing framework for this problem to end it completely from the society. When families learn to respect consent and the state ensures justice, then a sustainable future can be guaranteed. Pakistan needs to move from force obedience to true honor, the societies created in this way would not need to be controlled forcibly but progress through compassion and respect.
