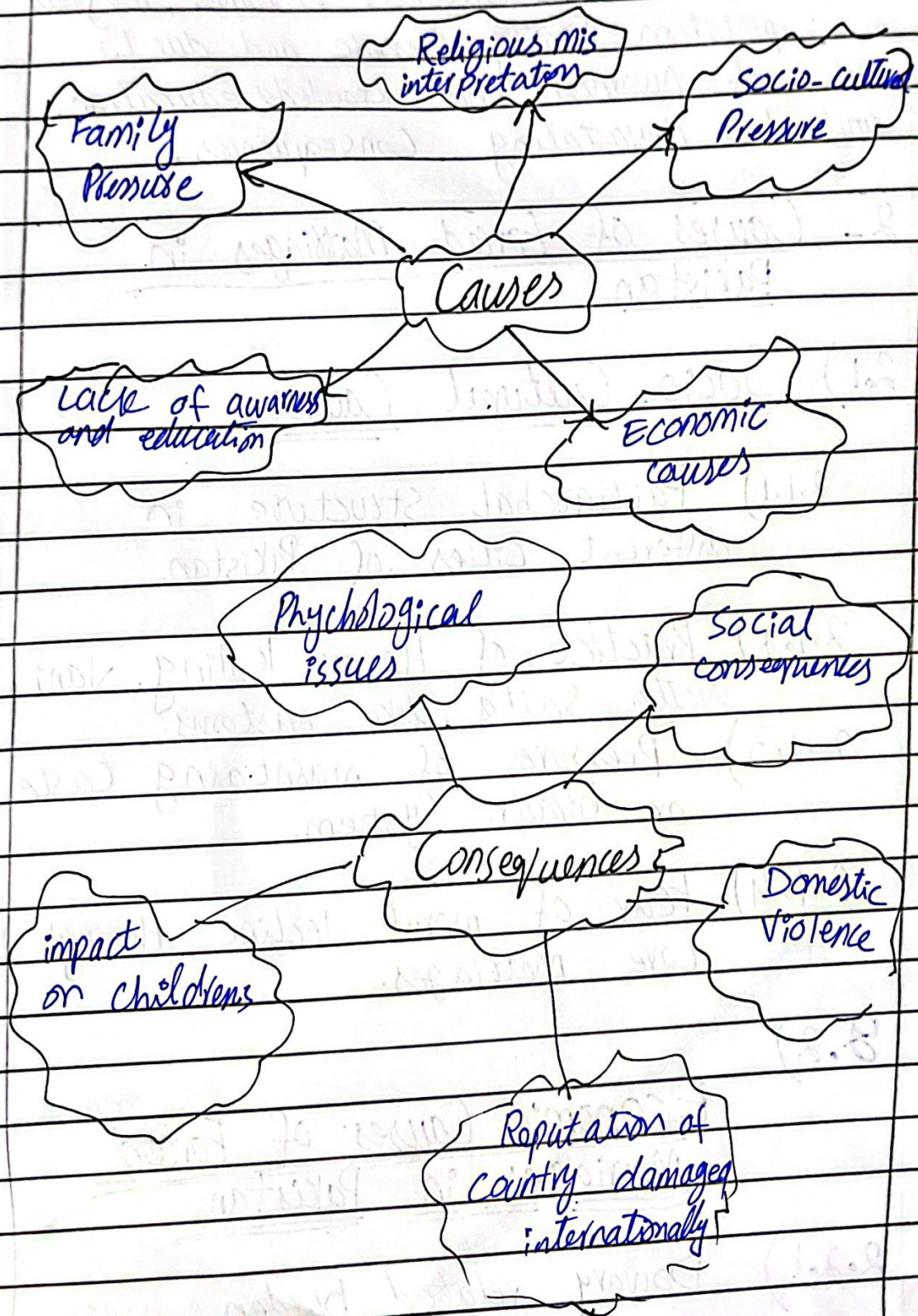


Topic: Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences



Outline

1. Introduction

1.1) Thesis Statement: Forced marriages in Pakistan stem from deep rooted socio-cultural, economic, religious misinterpretation, family pressure and due to lack of Awareness and knowledge education and has devastating consequences.

2. Causes of Forced Marriages in Pakistan

2.1) Socio-Cultural Causes

2.1.1) Patriarchal Structure in different Cities of Pakistan.

2.1.2) Practice of Honor Killing, Jari watta, Satta, like customs.

2.1.3) Pressure of maintaining caste or biradri System.

2.1.4) Fear of moral decline through Love Marriages.

2.2)

Economic Causes of Forced Marriages in Pakistan

2.2.1) Dowry related burden issues.

2.2.2) Marriage as an economic contract.

2.2.3) Conflict Settlements within two tribes through forced union.
Land or debt related settlements.

2.3) Religious Misinterpretation as a Cause of Forced Marriages in Pakistan

2.3.1) Misuse of religious teaching by less-informed clerics.

2.3.2) False notion of obedience to parents as religiously mandatory in marriage decisions.

2.3.3) Proper religious education does not exist about Consent (Raza) in Nikah.

2.4) Lack of Education and Awareness as cause of Forced marriages in Pakistan :

2.4.1) Females are not aware about the legal rights.

2.4.2) Female facing gender discrimination in marriage decisions due to lack of education.

2.5) Family Pressure as a cause of Forced marriages

2.5.1) Emotional blackmailing by family

is major cause of forced marriages.

3. Consequences of Forced Marriages

3.1) Psychological Results

3.1.1) Increase in depression anxiety and suicidal rates.

3.1.2) Loss of Personal identity

~~3.1.3)~~

3.2) Social Consequences

3.2.1) Break down of family structure

3.2.2) Increase in divorce rate.

3.2.3) Social Isolation after divorce.

3.3) Economic Consequences

3.3.1) Loss of productive potential of women.

3.3.2) Increase in poverty cycle and dependence on male.

3.3.3) Burden of state resources through social and legal disputes.

3.4) Impact on Children

3.4.1) Domestic violence negatively impact on children.

3.5) Image damage of Country.

3.5.1) Criticism from international Human rights Organization.

4- Way forward

- 4.1) Increase in campaigns from grassroots level to create awareness.
- 4.2) Gender education in school.
- 4.3) Religious reforms to clarify Islamic stance on consent.
- 4.4) Media activism in influencing to reshape social attitudes.
- 4.5) Strengthening law implementation.

5- Conclusion

Introduction

Imagine a Young Girl, barely sixteen being told her future has been already decided — not by destiny but by tradition. Such is the silent tragedy of countless forced marriages in Pakistan. Marriage is universally recognized as a ~~sex~~ sacred social contract built on mutual respect, affection and understanding. But in many areas of Pakistan, this noble institution is riven by the shackles of patriarchy and many other misguided traditions and practices. Forced marriage is a concept where one, or sometimes both people are compelled to be partners without their free decisions. These marriages frequently justified on the name of family honor

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religion, economic gain and many other factors. Consequently, it damaged in the psychological, legal, social ways and negatively impact future generation as well as lessen the reputation of Country Pakistan, all over the world.

To begin with Socio-cultural cause that lies most in old patterns culture. Marriages arranged to feudal alliances, as man holds position of decision making and women dependent. If women choice to whom she should marry, it is considered as threatens to family honor. That is the reason forced marriages taking place because women's otherwise with face the practice of honor killing.

According to Human Right Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), 346 cases of honor killing in 2024 has been reported nationally. Similarly there are many cases that went un-reported. Another cause of forced marriage is pressure of maintaining caste or biraderi system. If women or men ~~was~~ marry outside caste they will ^{be} similarly treated on the name of honor killing. The recent example of Balochistan has been seen. A couple, love married and after their marriage, they betrayedly ~~and~~ invited on Lunch and the Panchayat decided to kill them. And they both were murdered by the ^{mutual} decision of Panchayat and family.

Similarly Watta Satta Practice is also most common ~~en~~ cause of forced marriages. If some one wants to marry with a girl of any other tribe then tribe demand for their girl back in marriage to be equal. This concept is basically of exchange marriages. In 2022, Rukhsana case in Sindh is example - She was 17 year old girl and married to settle a family feud under Watta Satta concept.

Secondly, major causes of forced marriages also involve Economic factor. In poor families marriage is also considered as a mean of financial survival. Daughters may be married off early in order to reduce the burden on Parents. For example, if the widow male having children sent proposal and asked he would not demand for dowry, the poor parents marry their daughter forcefully because they got relief of dowry.

Another similar problem has been seen as economic contract. Some people wanted rich family so that they can be financially stable. In 2022, the floods in Sindh was devastated. One family married their 12 years old daughter with 25 years old man because they got displaced due to flood and the man offered them for (4808), 150,000 PKR at that

time.

Conflict Settlement ~~con~~ between two parties also done by forcefully marriage. There is commonly being practiced in many areas of Pakistan to resolve a conflict, only way is to get married ~~to~~ ~~to~~ in that specific tribe. The most of the issues ^{are} ~~were~~ related to Land or debt. Many Case Studies has been witnessed in this regard. In Faisalabad, a 12 years girl was forced into marriage because his Step Father took loan of 110,000 Rs from someone and not able to return so in compensation, 12 years old girl had to marry.

Thirdly, most common and emotional approach is being used by the cultures and society is Religiously misinterpretation. Islam clearly states the consent of both people is mandatory for Nikah. But low informed religious clarcis have their own definations and interpretations. Some of Nikah Khawan's do not get consent from bride and the guardian of bride allow "Ijab-o-Qabool" and the Qazi consider it and nikah is completed. An other example of it is false notion of obedience to parents. Islam emphasis on good treatment of parents, not sanction forced marriage. Many studies found that young girls accept any kind of

Proposals chosen by their parents on the belief that "Security" lies in obedience. This conflation of culture and religion empowers guardians to override the free will of daughters, turning a sacred institution into one of control rather than mutual consent.

Fourthly, educational deprivation compound the problem of forced marriage. Girls are mostly illiterate in rural areas and do not aware about their rights, legally and religiously. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-2018, 35% of women 20-24 year old were married before age of 18 and these ^{cases} issues were mostly reported from Low literacy areas like Balochistan, South Punjab and the rural Sindh. The survey found a strong inverse relationship between the education and forced marriages. Low education will leads towards more forced marriage. UNICEF Pakistan 2022 also reported the lack of education remain a key factor behind Child and Forced marriages in rural Pakistan.

The consequences of forced marriages are equally severe and multi-faceted.

The forced marriages increased the level of anxiety, depression and suicide attacks among married forcefully people.

Aurat Foundation 2019 estimates that nearly sixty percent of women in forced marriages experiencing emotional or physical abuse. Many of them developed anxiety or post traumatic stress disorders due to continuous violence and lack of agency. 38% cases, women faced psychological and physical trauma's due to incompatibility.

Lahore High Court 2018 Case of *Saima vs State* is valuable to discuss. She filed a case as fled of forced marriage. She was facing psychological issue & Judge observed A marriage without free consent is void under Islamic & Pakistan Law. The Women's Trauma & social ostracism highlight the human cost of such practices.

Another worst consequence of forced marriage come up with increase in domestic violence. Forced marriages caused increase in marital rapes, physical harm by beating. This is not only in rural areas but also common in urban areas.

Centre For Research and Security Studies (CRSS) Islamabad reported Pakistan sees 46% surge in violence in 2025 901 lives lost. Another data show 51.9% of married women report physical abuse and 73.1% report emotional abuse.

The structure reflects high vulnerability of women in these marriages.

Domestic violence in forced marriage also negatively impact the childrens. Women is already being victim of violence but the future generation faced its impacts in form of abnormality, and psychological trauma's. Policy analysis of domestic violence in Pakistan notes that the children who witnessed their parents being abusive to each other were found more likely to suffer from low self esteem and emotional distress. They can also be abusive towards their intimate partners in future. An other research of Agha Khan University, found that children whose mothers experienced intimate partner violence had significantly poorer nutritional outcomes.

At Last, The most severe consequence of the forced marriages is being faced is the negative portrayal of image of Country globally. A Joint ~~stam~~ statement by United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human rights and other UN experts criticised Pakistan for "Child ~~g~~, Early Forced marriages". This shows that the international bodies are viewing Pakistan as a mark against country's Human right record and signals that Pakistan is under scrutiny for practices that tarnish its global image.

The elimination of forced marriages in Pakistan requires a multi dimensional and sustained strategy that integrates legal, educational, religious and socio-economic reforms. There should be strict implementation of LAWS that are existing and analyze the new policies needed to implemented.

Secondly there should be promotion of education and awareness. Media ~~can~~

should also play its role in this regard to sensitize people about the current scene. Thirdly there should grassroot level campaigns to that areas where the media reach is un-accessable.

Fourthly, there ~~should~~^{must} be needed by religious institutions to reclaim their narrative and correctly spread the message and teachings of religion.

Lastly, There is need to take critical steps on economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. Because mostly forced marriage occurred because of economic and financial strains.

It can be concluded as forced marriages in Pakistan remained a grave violation of human rights that increased due to various reasons like patriarchal system, ignorance, socio-cultural and economic factors and resultanty,

role

has damaged the women, children and men's mental health as well as destroyed the image of Pakistan. To eradicate it, Pakistan must move beyond legislation towards education, religion, awareness and economic empowerment. Economic independence and community engagement are vital to ending this cycle of violence.