

"Exam"

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"Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences"

Outline

1. Introduction:

1.1. Attention Grabber

1.2. Background

1.3. Thesis statement: Many families force their children to get ^{marry} because of poverty, lack of education, cultural backgrounds and other humanitarian causes which results in domestic violence, sexual assual, health risks and social stigma.

2. Causes of Forced marriages in Pakistan:

2.1. Economic cause.

2.1.1. Poverty

2.1.2. High cost of dowry

2.1.3. Lack of female and sometimes male education.

2.2. Climate Cause.

2.3. Social and cultural causes.

2.3.1. Gender inequality

2.3.2. Family Honor

2.3.3. Exchange marriages

2.3.4. Control over sexuality.

2.4. Misinterpretation of religious beliefs.

2.4.1. Misconception about the religious (Islam).

2.4.2 - Weak legal enforcement.

2.4.3. Lack of legal protection.

2.5 • Lack of Education and Awareness.

3 • Consequences of forced Marriages in Pakistan:

3.1 • Health consequences.

3.1.1 • Physical Health.

3.1.2 • Mental and emotional health.

3.1.3 • Lack of Reproductive control.

3.2 • Social and educational consequences.

3.2.1 • Loss of education.

3.2.2 • Poverty

3.2.3 • Domestic violence

3.3 • Legal and Systemic consequences.

3.3.1 • weak legal protection.

3.3.2 • Unregistered marriages.

3.3.3 • Systemic issues

4 • way forward

5 • Conclusion:

5.1.1 • Thesis restated

5.1.2 • Conclusion.

"Forced Marriages in Pakistan: Causes and Consequences"

Forced marriages are defined as a union where one or both individuals enter into a marriage without free or full consent, it remains as a distressing reality in Pakistan. Despite incremental progress, including landmark Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 raising the legal marriage ~~to~~ age to 18, forced marriages still affect millions, particularly in rural and impoverished areas. According to UNICEF, nearly 19 million women and girls in Pakistan were married before age 18. Despite of legal prohibitions and global human rights commitments, many families in Pakistan force their children to marry, driven by deep-rooted economic hardships such as poverty, lack of education, social and cultural causes and other humanitarian problems. These marriages result in domestic violence and sexual assault, health risks and other social and legal consequences.

One of the primary cause of forced marriages in Pakistan is driven by economic hardships where families are burdened with poverty. They see forced marriages as a survival strategy. ~~Particularly~~ Particularly in rural areas, families could

not afford food and education of their children, they feel a burden on their shoulder and try to avoid it by through forcing their daughters to get marry. On other hand; in cases of boys, families force them to get marry to reduce their financial burdens and to secure economic gain through ~~claiming dowry~~ demand of dowry. Many families pressurized by financial issue and high cost of education also go for force marriages. This ~~desperation~~ desperation to secure the family's immediate economic needs perpetuate early and force marriages despite of their harmful consequences.

Another cause of force marriage is the climatic cause. Many families, particularly in rural and flood-affected areas like parts of sindh and punjab, catastrophic monsoon floods have increased poverty, leading families to marry off their ~~daughters~~ daughters as young as nine, receiving payments sometimes as low as a price of cow. As illustrated by local non-profits reports, such marriages spike prior to the monsoon season, indicating preemptive attempts to mitigate future vulnerability. This transactional approach commodifies girls' lives, perpetuating poverty and stripping children of education and childhood itself.

Additionally, social and cultural issues

also play a role in force marriages. Pakistan's deeply patriarchal society curtails women's rights, agency and choices. Female subordination is institutionalized through economic dependency, restricted mobility and gendered expectations centered around marriage and motherhood. Force marriage is an extension of gender inequality with women and girls having little say in their life decisions. This systemic gender bias affects not only marriage practices but also access to education, healthcare and justice. Similarly cultural imperatives focused on family honor, chastity and conformity place enormous pressure on families to marry their daughters early. In Pakistan, girl's worth is closely tied to her marital status and delays in marriage provoke social stigma, gossip or perceived dishonor. Families also view marriage as a protective measure to avoid fear of sexual violence and social marginalization, ironically increasing vulnerability ~~and~~ by ignoring consent and wellbeing. Many families believe that marriage is a protective way to have a control over sexuality as in young age females or males are vulnerable to involve in sexual acts.

In Pakistan, many families misinterpret their religious beliefs to justify force marriages. As in Islam, it is guided that



women and girls should be asked about their choice to get marry but in a patriarchal society this is misconceived and ignored. In recent era, mostly ignore their children right of choice to marry. Reports indicate that force marriage is sometimes used by dominant groups to forcibly convert girls from religious minorities. ~~According to~~ Islam it also guides a male to marry a widow but in Pakistan it is used as a stigma due to which people avoid marry them and go for early/young marriage. Similarly, ~~in Pakistan~~ Pakistan legislative progress ~~says that~~ has increased the legal age of marriage to 18 but due to weak legal enforcement forced marriages still affect millions, particularly in rural areas. Legal reforms alone are insufficient without effective enforcement. In case a girl files a complaint against this issue they are not properly dealt with, leaving them to suffer persistent threats and injustice.

Lastly, illiteracy and limited awareness of family about the harm of forced marriages and legal rights contribute significantly to its continuation. Many girls and their families do not fully comprehend long-term consequences of early unions and forced marriages.

These all causes results in long-term

and short-term consequences. These consequences ultimately leads to failure of marriage.

Major problem caused by forced marriage is the risk of health. In Pakistan, mostly girls are forced to marry in a young age which poses a high risk to health by early pregnancies. These pregnancies are associated with higher maternal mortality rates, obstetric complications and infant mortality. Forced and early marriage often precipitate early childbearing in physical immature bodies leading to ~~obstetric~~ to conditions like anemia, obstetric condition and prenatal complications. Similarly, as girls are forced to marry, they entirely depend upon their spouse which take their freedom and choice. This lead to depression, anxiety, PTSD and social isolation. Victims live with the trauma of coercion. Young bodies, stripped of support system, struggle with low self-esteem and hopelessness.

Another consequence that occurs is a loss of education. Forced marriage prematurely ends educational opportunities especially for girls, denying them the chance to develop skills and participate in the workforce. Education disruption reduces lifetime earnings potential and economic empowerment, thereby reinforcing cycles of poverty and dependence. This economic stigmatisation affect not only individual but also broader societal

progress. Forced marriage is a violation of human rights. It removes personal choice in one of life's most significant decisions, interfering in the right of autonomy, equality and freedom from coercion. Most people as a result of unsatisfaction become violent especially males. They use domestic violence in order to reduce their frustration. They violently beat their spouses and in some cases they go for marital rape or sexual assault.

Lastly, forced marriages lead to legal and systemic consequences. Many females report domestic violence and sexual assault but again nobody gives attention to it and thus justice remains denied. In rural areas, there is a large number of such cases but they remain unaddressed. Families also force their children to marry as a compensation like in some areas if a person kills another person, his family use their daughter as a compensation of loss. Similarly it is also done in case of honour like ~~rani~~ and ~~swara~~ swara marriages.

These marriages can be reduced or put to an end by strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement, promoting education and Awareness, by introducing programs to alleviate poverty, by introducing

Support services for victims, engaging community and Religious leaders in changing ~~so~~ societal attitudes that sustain forced marriage and by protecting minority rights.

Forced marriages in Pakistan remain a complex problem driven by poverty, lack of education, social and cultural issues and other problems. Its profound health risks, legal and social consequences undermine individual rights.