

Matchmaking and Traditionally Arranged Marriages and Domestic Violence in Rural Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the experience and understandings of men about domestic violence and concepts regarding the different types of marriages performed in the rural Sindh, Pakistan. The participants lived experiences of the male participants' have been explored to find out the major effects of matchmaking and traditional types of marriage approaches. Apart from that, the men's perception, social, cultural, and religious beliefs regarding the marriage have been discussed that how does matchmaking and traditionally arranged marriages influence the domestic violence in rural Sindh, Pakistan. Thus, a qualitative study on 12 in-depth interviews with married men from three different age groups – young, middle, and old age of men were undertaken. Data were analyzed using NVIVO software. The major findings indicated that in this type of traditional marriages, men enjoyed the power and superiority over the women, and women are beaten up frequently by husband or by the rest of the male member of the family.

Keywords: *Marriage, Domestic violence, beliefs, Influence, socio-cultural, Rural Sindh.*

1. Introduction

The marriage is supposed to be considered as the most fundamental element of the family unit in Muslim societies of the world, which causes to increase the generation as whole. However, (Qayyum, 2013, pp.20-25) argued that marriages in Sindh, Pakistan are most of the cases settled on the different realities for instances: the local term used in this regard are, De Wath or watta satta (Exchange marriages), Vanni, (to settle murder or dispute) khoon Baha (the custom to settle dispute and murder), khapaen (to sell out bride on price) Badle Sulah (to settle other disputes) minor disputes by the family or community and Haq Bakshraen (Marriage of female with Holy Quran) and in last the arranged marriage (marriages settled by the groom's and bride's parents family members). Such types of marriage are practised in many parts of Sindh, Pakistan. Though, there is the concept of love marriage in Pakistan, yet many of the couples in the rural areas, test the death or killing by the groom/bride family. There are some

figure of some provinces and districts of Pakistan, Such as in the Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab and its some districts, like; Kashmore, Jacobabad, Jaffarabad, Naseerabad, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzzafargarh. It was estimated that marriages which were settled or practiced under the customary practices were more than 77%, and 12% of the marriages were practiced to settle their old scores and disputes.

Moreover, the highest number 85% of marriages were practiced and settled as an exchange marriage, and in this type of marriage one's siblings are married to another family. Furthermore, some districts of Sindh, such as Jacobabad having (66%) and Kashmore 78% of frequent arrange marriages, which was higher than rest of the districts in Pakistan. However, due to this significant figure of exchange marriages violence generally and particularly domestic violence was found in abundance in these districts of Sindh, Pakistan. Hence, this can easily be concluded from the obtained data and research that the marriage and its way is performed and practised in Pakistan is really having a biggest issue and causes the domestic violence at large. Pakeeza (2015) argues that patriarchal gender system, social, cultural and institutional structural framework also cause the domestic violence in Pakistani society. And this also continues suppression of rights of women and their degraded social status as well.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Meaning of marriage to men*

Multiple and interesting views of respondents were found regarding the marriage and they have different consideration for marriage such as: Marriage is social, cultural, want of children, religious need, biological and sexual needs. Apart from that marriages are also performed to avoid the adultery and sins. However, Marriage is necessary for house chores performed by wife and it is performed to full fill the need of sex of both genders, it is performed due to its parents' wish, need of children specially the want of son child for heirs of property. And more for the customary works, compulsion due to exchange marriage in which this is compulsory for the other side to have marriage at same time at once and marriage is also performed to settle the old scores and forced marriages are also performed in this regard. And sometimes need to money and some culturally sell the bride on money or on the piece of land, (cash or kind) to full fill the marriage expenditures and so on. Bhattacharya (2014, pp.87-191)

argue that selling of bride is considered to be the commodity to the women in the some tribal or rural areas of Sindh, Baluchistan, and KPK Pakistan as well (cited in Noor, 2004: 48). While, forced marriages either in Islam or Pakistani law is prohibited yet this type of marriage is performed despite the fact that giving the customary interpretations and justifications (cited in Badawi 1980). However, another kind of marriage is also being performed “Haq Bakhsraen” which literally mean “to relinquishing the right to marry by women” is also prohibited in Islam and by the law of Pakistan, yet this is performed because the parents don’t have the suitable relation to marry the girls or don’t want their property and share to be distributed to another family. And other reason is caste system especially the Syeds and Makhdooms who don’t want their daughters or sisters to be married in the lower castes of Sindh, Pakistan. However, the issue of class and caste system in this type of marriage also prevails as one of the major reason. And this type of marriage is still have a tendency in Sindh and southern Punjab part of Pakistan, and in law there is seven year punishment as well (cited in Pianta 2013). However, some girls in the young age or in the ten age she is married to Holy Quran also, to intact the property is the main cause of this marriage in some caste and class system (cited in Noor, 2004: 42). For instance: “theory of Marital Power” describes by (Cromwell and Olson, 1975) that there is a supposition that power descends in three areas: power bases, power processes and power outcomes as well. Power bases: This include the assets and resources that offer the basis for just one partner's domination around another. Power processes: This include the interactional techniques that an individual uses to get control, for instance: negotiation, forcefulness in addition to problem-solving. While, power and result passes on who truly makes the decision. According to this specific theory, individuals’ partners who lack power, could be more likely to physically punishment and marital power include men’s power and patriarchy which, to certain extent may cause to domestic violence. But this may not be limited to every community or society where there are women empowered in the social system of society (Loue, 2001, p.33).

2.2 Narrations of men regarding the concept of marriage

There are different perspectives and narrations of men respondents to describe the marriage its meaning and concepts and role of men within the marriage relationship. Further, the different narratives have been assumed by the participants’ such as: Marriage performed in

the rural areas of Sindh particular in Dadu are traditional types and different from urban areas of Sindh and Pakistan as well. In Dadu rural the concept of marriage is different. Such as:

De, wath, watta satta (exchange marriages), arrange marriages, Vanni (to settle the old scores), Haqbkhsraen (marriage with Holy Quran), caste system marriage (within castes, like syeds, Qureshi, pirs, etc) or endogamy, khapaen (to sell the bride on money or Zameen (field/farm). And such marriages are just performed to keep their rites and traditions alive, in which women most of the cases suffer physically and mentally. (Haji Economic student)

He stated that the traditional types of marriages performed in the said areas are very common and these marriages are not performed on the wish of women or considering their rights, rather these are performed due to uphold the hegemony of patriarchal society and to uphold their old traditions and rights of society and culture. And in such types of traditional marriages men enjoy, because he has all power over the women and superiority as well. However, the women in marriage relationship suffer a lot mentally and physically. While failed into performing the matchmaking marriages and traditional types of marriages of this particular society women suffer from the domestic violence and are frequently beaten up by either man in the family. Gangolo & Mc Carry (2006) defines that there are some communities like Pakistan and Bangladesh because of caste system force them to marry within community in the regional aspect to keep their identity alive (cited in Barot, 1998) and also force the couple to marry with their will to uphold the customary practices by the cultural practices of community and society in the region they are living in. above all, this only don't violates the human rights but also influence the domestic violence in the south Asian communities. Another respondent stated that:

Sometimes in the rural culture marriages are performed due to take revenge of aggrieved party, and women/girl is kidnapped and marriage is settled by the enemy with women. And thus, forced marriages are also performed occasionally. (Akbar farmer).

The respondent viewed that forced marriages are also performed in this particular by taking revenge to enemy while kidnapping the women such marriages are performed. And in this case only women are victimized to get her marriage with the enemy side, and she is married with enemy son, brother or any male member of the immediate or the extended family. Whereas

this type of marriage is not performed with consent of family rather to take revenge the enemy's family. And in such cases, the women is always humiliated, victimized and fall prey to domestic violence by the family of the opponent. Because she is daughter/sister of an enemy. And this continues to the both side unless the tribal and communal quarrel end. And in this entire scenario of communal quarrels and tribal disputes women have more sufferings as compared to men. Besides, it continues unless informal decisions (except the judiciary or court of law) are made by the tribal chiefs in the particular areas of Sindh. And issues are resolved with the consent of chieftains and tribal heads.

Marriage is a journey of life and name of responsibility for both gender, it is obviously social, cultural and religious bond of life. And celibacy is sin in Islam hence better to marry and have children. And mostly there are arrange marriages in this society in which women are supposed to be the housekeeper and for house chores if she denies she is beaten by the husband mostly. And in many cases, the marriages resettled since the childhood. (Jaffar Ngo Worker).

From the narrative of participant it is crystal clear that marriage is still considered to be the socio-religious responsibility and of the journey of life and religious obligation also. Instead of treating this relation of marriage on equal basis participants of this area relate the marriage with religious and cultural aspects and traditional to produce the children only. And after her marriage, she is supposed to be a house wife and will have to work at home, and if she refuses to housework she is supposed to be beaten by husband at large. Because housework or children nurture are her responsibility in rural culture and her parents also don't intervene in the matter because it is against social and moral values and parents don't involve in husband wife's personal matter. Hence, traditional types and even arrange types of marriage which are less matchmaking or having less understanding by the couple cause the most frequent skirmishes and woman is beaten up. Above all, the early or child marriages are also performed in most of the cases in the rural families of Sindh which are settled after the immediate birth of the child either male or a female baby. And when the married children grown up this again cause the discomfort and tension amongst the couple. UNICEF (2005) describes that women married in early age are most frequently threatened and beaten by the husband and rest of the family members with the different justification of violence. (Cited in Bruce, Lloyd and Leonard) that report that 40% to 80% of women are physically assaulted by the husband and other family members.

2.3 *Marriage as a social, religious and legal acceptance by the society*

Marriage has social, religious legal and moral acceptance in the society, without that both sexes but commonly man is not given due respect in the society. Because apart from the marriage man is supposed to be considered as a Wando (free man/woman). Marriage is basically legal relation, in which there is a sense of belonging and this is best for a human being. Bachelor person either man or woman don't have respect in society.

charro manho kute khan be ghat izat athas= (Bachelor person has less respect even than a dog).
Manho, Nango ahe shadi khan sawa = (Unmarried person is considered to be socially naked).
(Latif).

Whereas, participant narrates that marriage is legal relation and bond of society in which there is a sense of belonging, and this completes the family unit as well. But the bachelor person is not given any respect either man or woman in the societal culture because religiously it is thought to have married after attaining the age of puberty it is considered for both. Another participant told that:

Sometimes marriage apart from all is performed because the house or family needs a house worker and sexual partner for the man. When male tends to delinquent behavior it is told by the parents that get him married he will be on the right path after the responsibility of marriage. And he will have a sex partner and a house worker lady in the home. (Qurban).

The participant is vivid in his thought that marriage is just considered as a sexual, social and family need of man in the particular society. The marriage is performed for correction or saving him from his sexual deviancy and need of a free worker for house chores in shape of a wife. The marriage is performed only to keep the man happy and cheerful and provide him with the all possible happiness of life by his wife. The man has never considered the marriage as the basis of equal relations with women. In that cases, he considers the women as his commodity to use her at any time. And women have always sacrificed on this relationship but men in particular society enjoy his power and religious authority to marry more than one women also and falling to provide equality he also perpetuates the violence for controlling the women.

2.4 Roles of husband and wife in traditional marriage relationship

The views and perceptions of participants regarding the roles of man and woman after marriage are that men will be the bread winner and will look after the external affairs and issue mostly related to the community and society. Hiller and Philliber (1986) argue that the roles expectations, division of labor and perceptions are more traditional rather than expectations of the intimate partners, and only child care is share specifically if the wife has a job or working outside. And the man also does not want to change his and share his roles with the woman at large.

Wife / women are supposed to take care at home, while the male will tackle outside/external matters and affairs and male as a bread winner. And, this is happening since a long time, and these roles will remain same. However, failing to play the described role of women in society causes her domestic violence. Society, culture and some religion restriction in some caste also hinder women to go out to play their roles outside the home, and women are also less educated and aware from the external affairs. (Jani school teacher).

The participant revealed that men's role is same since centuries that he will be the bread winner and look after the external matters of family, community and society. These roles are not supposed to be changed and these roles will remain same in this particular rural society. The culture, society, caste system and religion also have somehow effects to the roles of women outside the home. Hence, external affairs are only dealt by the men in the rural areas. And it's another reason is education and exposure of women who are neither educated nor given the external exposure to deal with the societal matters to play their roles. Above all, the atmosphere of male-oriented society also hinders women from external dealings. Khan (2012) argues that women by all accounts are given the work of house chores and males are given responsibility to run the home and to manage the expenses. However, women are not supposed to be given the opportunity of education and employment to come forward to play their roles positively for the nation and to seek employment also. But only in urban or big cities women have such access to get all these benefits like education and job facilities in Pakistan.

This country is religious prone, laws are Islamic and society is orthodox in its thought; that why male is bread earner and female is ordered to live inside the home and take care of family and children. And in this society, man must be the primary earner, and a woman should

take care of family and its parents, either parents she is living with. If she denies her traditional roles of being motherhood, sisterhood responsibilities of being women her roles played at home then definitely she will be beaten up by the husband. (Imran, IT student).

This participant viewed that roles of womanhood are decided by the society, culture, religion, men, and family if women are failed to perform their due roles she will be punished. And her husband would beat her, on her failure to perform her roles, which every married woman have to perform the marriage. Hussain (1999) states that marriage system in Pakistan is almost consanguine and almost 90% of marriages in Sindh are contracted between the close relations stated that the most of the consanguine marriage in close relation is the religious factor and most of the people consider this that religion supports to have marriage in the close relations. While they quote the example of prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) who got married her daughter Fatima with Hazrat Ali his first cousin. However, the unequal relationship within the marriage of men and women leads to skirmishes between the couple and become the cause of the domestic violence.

3. Methodology

However, from methodological point view, this is the qualitative study by its nature in which 12-twelve in-depth interviews, with a purposive sampling of only male participants were conducted in the rural Sindh district Dadu taluka Johi. However, different age groups of participants such as: (age ranged from 18-65 years) were selected, purposively. While, 18-years is supposed to be the adult and marriage age for male, and 65 years age was cut age due to the life expectancy rate of Pakistan . The average age of participants were 44.9 and amongst them nine were married and three were unmarried. However, five amongst them were primary (five standard pass) and three were ten standard passes and four were illiterate.

4. Analysis

While, after conducting interviews, the data was transcribed and it's verbatim were coded into open coding, categorized into major and later on rare and scare themes. First of all the general category was recognized by the all, later on, typical patterns in which more than half of respondents identified the same category and later on, is the variant or themes and categories in which more than one identified the category (Dagirmanjian et all, 2016). And apart from that with the help of NVIVO software, the data was managed and analyzed as well.

Moreover, the participants' were informed about the study and its objectives and written consent and verbal consent was obtained before conducting the interview and during the data collection. Above all, the participants' pseudonyms were used in this study, to protect their identity and anonymity.

5. Conclusion

The right to 'free and full' marriage is declared by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the same way the Convention on all forms of Discrimination against Women also protects the early or child marriages and so on. However, this study shows that marriages which are failed to be performed such as matchmaking marriages and traditional types of marriages in the particular areas of rural Sindh district Dadu Pakistan has much more influence on the domestic violence. Because such types of marriages, like, DeWath (exchange marriage) Dand Chatti (Marriages performed to settle the old scores) Haq Bakhraen (marriage with Holy Quran), child marriages settled during the time of birth of female baby and male baby, Kunwar Khapaen (to sell the bride on money or land), Zor Je Shadi (forced marriages) kidnapped marriages and other forms of endogamous marriages within castes, in Syeds, Qureshi, or rest of the castes which are restricted within caste system due to its socio-cultural and traditional customs performed by the particular community and society contribute much more to the domestic violence. Because in this type traditional and customary marriages women don't have any type of autonomy in term of the economy or in decision making due to the socio-cultural restrictions of the particular society in the rural Sindh Pakistan. And in the same way, women suffer in many aspects, not only this but face beatings and domestic violence also. And in this regard, the basic right of marriages of women is expunged. While, in this society, marriage is supposed to be only religious, social, traditional and cultural need of men and society, rather than the relation which footings equality or to be treated on the equal basis, and this concept of equality and equity does not exist over there.

6. References

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