

## **Social Impact of Early Marriages on Society: A Study in District Kharan Union Council Sarwan & Joda- e-Kalat**

By

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### **Abstract:**

*Marrying at the very early age is a serious violation of human rights accorded to women by CEDAW. Such initiative including other challenges posed by early marriage, it also contributes to mortality. Community and parents have direct involvement in early marriage which influences the education and economic status of girls and women. This study focuses on consequences of marriage at the very early age. The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through survey and structured interviews while secondary data was collected from books research article, journal, policy documents and NGOs reports. Finding discovered that lack of education is the main cause of perception held by community and parents on practice of early marriage. Furthermore there is no legislation to prevent or discourage the repugnant traditional and cultural practice. As per findings, the study recommends legal policy framework through advocacy and registration of marriage with government institution in order to avoid the curse of early marriages.*

**Keywords:** Early Marriage, human rights, Lack of Education, Economic and Education Status, Policy Documents, Research Articles, NGOs Reports, Cultural Practice, Policy Framework, Government institution,

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## Introduction:

In Worldwide marriage is an approved tradition to adjust and normalize the life of human being. This pattern is approved socially that two or more than two people can start a family. Marriage as an institutional pattern is specialized for brining unanimity and interdependence for maintaining the familial affairs (Bankole et al, 2004).

Early marriage is a common phenomenon in South Asian countries. In Pakistan this practice is very mutual in rural and urban areas. Early marriage couples especially girl suffer underprivileged psychologically, educationally, physically and economically. They also suffer from whole their life. Here we defined early marriage where girl and boy get marriage before the age of 18.

In our societies parents feel worry about the marriage of their daughters, and the concept coerces them to get free of this responsibility as soon as possible. The following traditions *Sawara*, *Vatta Satta*, *Wanni*, *Wulvar*<sup>1</sup> in Pakistan playing very important to role to get this practice repeat in various societies. There are many stereotypes and mind-set that considers girls *Amanat*<sup>2</sup> this must be return.

This is also practicing in our societies, that grooms are paying hug amount to marry a girl. Mostly they give benefits back to the family of girls. Boy's families are also responsible to bear the entire expenditures essential from girl's family.

According to constitution of Pakistan (1973), "Primary Education is the basic right of every child living in Pakistani society", if we compare the literacy rate of Pakistan with the other South Asia countries, we see it's very low and Lack of education contributes negative impacts of early marriages. It is also very difficult for women to practice the responsibilities of mature relationship at early age.

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Wani or Sawara is a cultural custom found in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan whereby a young girl is forcibly married as part of punishment for a crime committed by her male relatives

Vatta Satta, is a custom found in Pakistani societies where families the families exchange off their girls to one another in marriage

<sup>2</sup>Amanat (urdu word) is a cultural stereotype the meaning of this stereotype is, all girl are property of other male and will be return one day

Child Marriages Restraint Act 1929<sup>1</sup> exists in Pakistan. At the other side marriage registration system in Pakistan is also dysfunctional. In our society we don't have knowledge about these two regulations, so that mostly peoples get marriage before the age of 18 years.

This is very hard for a girl to have responsibilities of baby in very early age of 17 & 18. According to "Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2006-07)" This was also reported by many social organization and media interventions that 75 couples got married between the ages from 6 to 15-year-old

As per report of Institute for Social Justice (ISJ) Pakistan 2008-09, around 1054012 cases of early marriage reported between the ages from 6 to 17. This figure is more than as many of the cases in rural area are not reported due to lack of information and documentation the actual number of early marriage is not available.

In mostly development countries among the world the costumes of early marriage are very common. This took place because of many situation and community level. This situation directly affects girls and directly family. (Kabir, 2006). In Sahran Africa, South Asia, East Africa it is very mutual practice in forthcoming societies. (UNDESA, 2000).

Civil marriage registration is enactive globally in many countries. The purpose of this system is to show to actual age of the marriage couples. This is the main reason the influence for early marriage. According to UNICEF Worldwide Report 2016, around 15 million teenagers got married below the age of 18 and the ratio for early marriage is 28 cases per 60 seconds. There will not be any future for girls at all, if we not try to end early marriage which is totally again the violation of women rights. Young girls should be given right to choices" [girlsnotbide.org-report](http://girlsnotbide.org-report) if we take a view on "UNICEF Innocent Research 2012" will be able to see that the marriage in very age is very public Africa and South Asian areas. It is also expressed that this tradition is very common in North Africa and Middle East regions. In some case young girls are just inform once the decision became final by their parents or someone from family members. The teenagers do not have right to choose their partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Child Marriage Restraint Act 1927 (Also known as the Sarda Act), passed on 28 September 1929 in the British India Legislature of India, fixed the age of marriage for girls at 14 years and boys at 18 years which was later amended to 18 for girls and 21 for boys. ... It was a result of social reform movement in India

At family level female are dominating to male. They don't have power to include their desires in decision making process. Our society is circled with unnecessary costumes like Watta Satta<sup>1</sup> or exchange marriages. In mostly cases we also use young girls to spread peace among to two families or to reconcile the disputes exist among two families. Male also marry a young girl just to keep gender based control on. It is well known that young girls easily can be control according to the desire of male.

Child marriage is one of the social issues which practiced in the rural areas of Balochistan. According to "UNICEF Innocent Research 2012" there is no updated data available regarding early marriage in context of Balochistan, but mostly cases reported on the social media belongs to rural areas of Balochistan.

### **End Childhood and Risk of Domestic Violence:**

Early age marriages end the childhood of a girl, restrain her education and at the same time, limits her economic opportunities. We have a misconception to get marry their girls in early age, parents are protecting their daughters, which is off course, not correct. Under age brides don't have understanding of sexual practices and it leads them to domestic violence and most often to death. Most of the girls, got married in their early age (below 16 years) are died during their first childbirth. Government of Punjab has taken the initiative to discuss this in cabinet and increase the minimum age from 16 to 18 for marriages, constitutional changes in family laws etc. It is highly recommended to similar practices to be followed in other regions of the country and a proper legislation to be done against the under marriages.

Man has different phases of life. Childhood is one of them having its own glories and characteristics. If girls are got to be married in their early ages, it ends their childhood with its all self-deserved glorification. As it is very clear that age, from 10 to 16 years, is quite significant in human life in term of acquiring knowledge and education, hasty marriages also interrupts children's educational career especially of girls who are not mostly allowed to carry on their education after marriage. As a result they remain illiterate. Illiteracy increases the risk of their domestic violence which is not less than red card challenge for girls for life-long family relations.

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As stated above, child marriages limits their skills, resources, freedom, mobility, education and other basic rights, young married girls have very little power in their relations with husbands and in-laws which lead them to domestic violence. They are, therefore, extremely vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse and exploitation. Violence may include the physical, mental, sexual and psychological abuse. Girls with low bargaining power in the household are more likely to experience violence by intimate partner women with low levels of education and youth ages are at high risk of violence than better educated or older women.

### **End to Leisure and Participate In Cultural Life:**

Early age marriages end the childhood of children and take them to practical lives indeed. It also ends their participation in different cultural activities, rest and leisure activities too. Children enjoy their freedom more in their parent's houses instead of in-laws (especially girls). In context of Pakistan and especially Baluchistan, people are having very little opportunities of such events for many reasons i.e. poverty, social restrictions, security and far distances. Most of the population is living in small villages and deprived from their basic facilities like education, health and livelihood resources. Top of it, children are got married in their early ages which make them more practical and end their free lives.

Early age marriages of children is much challenging for both spouses since they are not quite experienced in contributing to the society with productive outcomes. The married life is itself a constant flow for them. There is not any productivity and contribution of the positive outcome to society, through their children is not possible. In experienced and young couples are totally occupied with their cultural and traditional rituals they have no potential remained for utilizing in the upbringing of their children. And the whole cycle continuous for future generations.

The defined gender roles of our society suddenly change the life of a girl when she became married. There are certain responsibilities which becomes her domain like overall domestic work. She doesn't have time to entertain herself through games or any other activity. Same is the case is with the boy who has been married in early ages but the suffering of girls is higher than the boys.

### **Increase the Risk of Early Divorce and Separation:**

Children are inpatient, having less experience of practical life, having no vision, unable to foresee the consequences of their actions, no

or less educated, unable to see the Bigger Picture, unable to make any long term decision. These are the root causes of an unsuccessful life and when they got married in their early age, they face such issues which end their marriage life and leads to early divorce and separation.

In Balochistan perspective divorce and separation does not exist in case of forcible early age marriages of children in some tribes. The males have right to remarry on the basis of issues in present married life, while the female in this situation compromise with their husbands and in-laws since they have no one to support them in case they demand divorce or separation, if they do so they are blamed for violation of dignity of the family and even can become prey to their character assassination.

The above mentioned overall scenario creates different kinds of psycho social issues for the couple who is not able to deal with the routine life issues on such certain age. The situation leads to domestic violence, separations and even divorce. The families ruin the lives of their children in an early age which affects their whole life afterwards. The sad part of the story is that these practices are being practiced repeatedly from ages and still there are families who believe in these customs of early age marriages.

In the society and communities of Balochistan, divorce is not liked. It is disrespect for both the families. Early age marriages are not reason of divorces. Lack of understanding between the couple can be cause of divorce.

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### **Negative Impacts on Mental and Emotional Development:**

Child marriages are a serious violation of human rights, child rights and women's rights and having negative impacts on mental and emotional development of that child particularly. Child brides become pregnant in their early age and it leads to high risk of delivery complications and mortality of child. It further impacts of their domestic lives. Under the age of 13-18, child brides face the sexual violence from

their husbands which has serious impacts on their mental, emotional and psychological growth.

Being deprived of education bearing responsibility of households at young age while on the high risk of violence treated as a possession what else is expected? Off course this occupies child mind and will have negative impacts on it stopping mental development in every way.

Marriage is a part of life and our door to enter a new world, but when this entry has been forcefully made earlier than we expected, then that is the time of life when the difficulties and problems start arising. Rushing to get married is not at all appreciable from any point of view, so wait for the time when you reach a mature age to cope up with the challenges with your partner and enjoy a successful life ahead.

A child who is married in childhood has great deal of negative impacts on her mental and emotional development as she is faced with all kinds of harassment and then she gets into psychological problems and attains no medical treatment, which gets complicated with the passage of time and one day reaches to the position of complete mental disorder.

At an age where a child should be basking in innocent games and gaining education, young girls and boys are married off before they are mentally, physically and psychologically prepared for the responsibilities that a marriage brings. Child marriage perpetuates the cycles of poverty, poor health, illiteracy, and violence that have negative impacts on overall development, prosperity, and stability.

Obviously human mentality and emotions are based on gradual process to develop in term of age. On this connection external inference plays its vital role to interrupt the entire mechanism of feelings and emotions. Such as; early marriage is a social and long life burden for children especially for girls because in order to become a successful mother it needs to bear great responsibility with an exciting performance. But in immature age, it looks quite impossible to be implemented. So an early married girl loses soon her strong nerves while practicing such harsh conditions. In this way unbearable challenges gradually leave negative impacts on mental and emotional development which result serious physical and mental ups and downs.

**Conclusion:**

In rural area of District Kharan traditionally mostly marriages are arranged by the elder and head of the family. The concept of marriage in rural area of Kharan is just a social requirement which must to be concluded. There is big identified regarding the empowerment individual identity of girls and family and community level. Girls are just seems as a homemakers and rather than an individuals.

**Suggestions and Recommendations:**

- To implement the early marriage law, it is important to register all the birth and marriages on time.
- There is lack of awareness among community about the early marriage laws, there should be advocacy for mass awareness raising at community level.
- Punishment for the violation of early marriage should be hard so that no one try to violate the laws of early marriage.
- New legislation on early marriage and there is need to enforce the mechanism of early marriage to ensure the minimum age for marriage as per early marriage law.
- Community social organization can play vital role for mass awareness raising at community level, awareness should be raised through community social organization.



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