

## **Sociological Analysis of Cultural Causes of Females' Early Marriages in Pakhtun Society and Its Impact on Their Education**

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### **Abstract**

In Pakistan, and especially in traditional and culturally conservative communities like the Pakhtun society, early marriage continues to be a major social issue for girls. The research paper titled "Sociological Analysis of Cultural Causes of Females' Early Marriages in Pakhtun Society and its impact on their Education" is devoted to investigating the sociocultural factors that lead to early marriage in District Charsadda and their impact on the schooling of girls. A cross-sectional descriptive design was used wherein data was collected through structured questionnaires from married women in Tehsil Tangi. Using a multistage random sampling technique, 395 respondents were selected to assess the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The results indicate that early marriage is often rationalized as a means to protect the family's honor, pass on the culture, and meet the expectations pertaining to the different sexes, at the same time girls' viewpoints are almost completely marginalized. One of the most ruining effects is on education as married girls have to deal with house chores, face the pressure of having children, and their freedom of movement and decision-making is very much restricted thus they end up dropping out of school before finishing secondary education. The resulting lack of education makes them non-competitive economically and personally, which in turn keeps them in poverty and under dependency. The, study, in, its, course, of, drawing, conclusions, asserts, that, child, marriage, is not an only, personal, problem of the girl, but, rather, a community issue that hinders social and economic development of the neighborhood. The, education, in, this, case, is, not, only, a safe-guard, but, also, the main, reason, that, girls, would, be, able, to, fight, against, early marriages, and, thus, be, the, ones, whose, input, in, the, society, would, be, significant. Legal, enforcement, community, awareness, educational, support, and empowerment initiatives, changing, the, societal attitudes, strengthening girls' education, and promoting sustainable social and economic development, are all required in the fight against early marriage.

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### **Introduction**

Marriage, a significant institution in all societies, has been the focus of comprehensive research

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across various fields of study. Marriage is a legally binding agreement that usually involves sexual intercourse, reproduction, and financial cooperation. It is a socially acceptable and close bond between two individuals. Over the last ten years, there have been a growing number of states and countries worldwide where legal recognition of marriage has extended to include same-sex couples. Historically, marriage has typically been a union between two individuals of different genders. The prevailing norm in the majority of societies is that a married couple is expected to have children and nurture them, forming a family of procreation. Marriage, as a legal institution, unites individuals and establishes the basis for family life through sexual and reproductive partnership (Macionis, 2018; Giddens et al., 2018; Cherlin, 2004). This is a sociocultural phenomenon that has been present in all communities worldwide (Adebowale et al., 2012). Marriage is a prevalent institution in both developed and non-developed countries, typically involving two individuals. The primary purpose of marriage is widely seen as socially, culturally, and religiously acceptable and valid for reproducing. Early child marriage refers to the practice of marrying females before they reach the age of eighteen - an age when they lack the mental and physical maturity to manage the demands of parenthood and housework (Raj et al., 2009).

Early marriage significantly impacts women's independence and educational prospects, impeding their progress in several domains of maternal, child, and adolescent health (Godha et al., 2013; Goli et al., 2015; Raj et al., 2014). There is a great correlation between early marriage and reproduction and maternal mortality, malnutrition, and illness. (Fall et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2019).

In Pakistan, the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 legally defines child marriage as a union that is declared before the attainment of the prescribed age, which is sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys. Before April 2010, the Pakistani Constitution did not contain the 18th Amendment, hence the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 constituted the legal framework that prohibited child marriage. Child marriages are forbidden as stated in Sections 4, 5, and 6.

According to Gibb et al. (2015), sociocultural influences, economic pressures, illiteracy, unemployment, mass media, religion, and beliefs all have a role in causing early marriages. According to Stephenson et al. (2014), marrying at a young age might lead to conflicts and problems within a family due to the couple's lack of readiness to fully assume the duties of marriage.

Child marriage is prevalent in all undeveloped nations, including Pakistan, where it is widely practiced and accepted. It is also used as a means to enforce gender-based discrimination against women. India and Bangladesh have made significant strides in tackling the problem of child marriages through the enforcement of the Child Marriages Restraint Act of 1929 (CMRA). However, the situation in Pakistan continues to be disheartening. Pakistan actively supported the UNCRC convention against child marriage by voting in favor of it in 1990. Nevertheless, these relationships have led to a diverse range of medical, social, mental, emotional, and financial problems (Mughal & Awan, 2020).

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive sociological analysis of the prevalence of early marriages among females in the Pakhtun community. It seeks to explore the different aspects of this phenomena and its significant impact on the educational chances and results of young girls. This study aims to enhance our understanding of the intricate social framework of Pakhtun culture by conducting a detailed analysis of the factors contributing to early marriages, the dynamics of gender roles and expectations, and the challenges faced by young brides in pursuing education.

Early marriage detrimentally impacts women's education by resulting in reduced educational achievements, diminished employment prospects, restricted financial autonomy, and perpetuating a cycle of poverty across generations. Furthermore, this study examines cultural attitudes and beliefs that endorse this practice, as well as possible avenues for transformation, such as alterations in legislation and municipal initiatives that promote gender equality and access to education.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between the cultural causes of early marriages and impact on their education.

### Research Questions

1. What are the socio-cultural factors responsible for early female marriages?

### Significance of the Study

Pukhtun society exhibits a tribal structure. The society has cultivated its distinct culture, characterized by its unique set of conventions and values. This culture is characterized by a patriarchal system, in which men exert dominance over women. The majority of decisions concerning women are made by the leader of the home. Who predominantly assumes a male identity without the agreement of women. One of these crucial choices is the decision to get married. Women are neither queried about their selection of a marital partner nor are they granted permission to exercise this decision. Furthermore, women's education is typically under the control of male members of their households. In such a system, households often want to arrange marriages for their daughters at a young age, as it is considered a social stigma for a woman to remain unmarried beyond a certain age. Under such circumstances, when women entered into matrimony at a young age, it had a detrimental impact on their education. Women in the husband's household assume the role of a homemaker and are responsible for managing all domestic tasks. Women in her husband's household are entirely subject to their control. In many cases, in-laws exert control over various aspects of their daughters-in-law's lives, including their education. Unfortunately, they often do not allow girls to pursue further education, instead prioritizing their role in raising and caring for children. This ultimately has negative consequences on the girls' education and health, as they become overwhelmed with responsibilities.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study will examine the effects of early marriages on the education of females, while investigating the underlying determinants of early marriages using a conceptual framework.

| Independent Variables | Dependent Variable |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Culture               | Female Education   |

### Literature Review

This study investigates the phenomenon of early marriage and its impact on female education. Child marriage has significant socio-economic implications for both families and communities. Early marriage in children increases the likelihood of living in poverty, as it frequently compels them to abandon education and engage in low-skilled, low-wage occupations. Child marriage perpetuates an ongoing cycle of poverty and disadvantage. This is due to the fact that offspring of adolescent mothers are more vulnerable to experiencing low birth weight and enduring malnutrition, which can lead to cognitive and developmental impairments (Ziegert & Sullivan, 2022).

The Socio-Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: A Breach of Human Rights with Far-reaching Ramifications - Child marriage greatly impedes the socio-economic advancement of communities and nations. Child marriage hinders the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, namely, about education, poverty, and gender equality (Hassan, 2020). In their study, Gular

and Kucuker (2010) examined the negative effects of early marriages on the physical and mental health of teenagers and their children. The study was conducted in the Afyonkarahisar region, Turkey, between 2000 and 2006. The study included teenage females who had been sent to court and were receiving mental health outpatient treatment at a university clinic. The authors, who were psychiatrists, employed direct interviews with all subjects with a questionnaire focused on social mobility. The survey findings revealed that the majority of the adolescents in the sample belonged to a lower socio-economic stratum and expressed a desire to get married upon finishing basic education. Furthermore, the research revealed that these adolescents received minimal sexual education from their parents, and the existing educational programs provided by their schools were insufficient. Jalovaara (2013) examined the differences in the influence of social and economic variables on the termination of cohabitations and marriages in Finland. Bhanji & Punjani (2014) conducted research on the legislation regarding child marriage in Sindh, Pakistan. This article examines the primary factors that contribute to child marriage, emphasizes the significance of the issue and its repercussions, and explores potential public health initiatives aimed at mitigating the harm. The authors emphasize that child marriage has experienced a global decrease over the past two decades and is increasingly acknowledged as a violation of human rights.

In their study, Duran and Eraslan (2019) investigated the determinants that impact women's choices to engage in early marriages. The study sample comprised 651 women who were aged 30 or younger and had experienced early marriage. The study identified education, poverty, and societal pressure as primary factors contributing to early marriages. The study's authors propose that women in the high-risk category should get education regarding the adverse consequences of early marriages. Additionally, individuals who have already entered into early marriages and are in need of assistance should be provided with support. In addition, they advocate for more stringent legal penalties to deter underage marriages. The study by Biswas et al. (2019) examined the societal and economic factors in Bangladesh that lead to child marriage. Four nationally representative cross-sectional polls done in the last ten years were used in the study. The results showed that the results that took into account people's ages were in line with what would be expected based on their financial backgrounds. Trommlerova (2020) examines the detrimental effects of adolescent pregnancy on early childhood mortality by analysing mortality data for 300,000 children in Bangladesh. Research findings indicate that infants born to mothers of a younger age face a higher likelihood of mortality within their initial year of life. Nevertheless, after giving birth, favourable socioeconomic factors such as wealth and education tend to offset the physiological disadvantage of teenage childbirth. Researchers have found that teen pregnancies kill about 18,700 children under the age of five every year in Bangladesh. In their 2020 study, Fattah and Camellia look into the views and experiences of child marriage in rural Bangladesh in great detail, giving a thorough look at this common social issue. The study's main goal is to look at how people talk about child marriage across the country and figure out what causes it to happen.

### **Child Marriage in Pakistan**

In Pakistan, a nation characterized by severe gender inequality on a worldwide scale (Khan et al., 2011; Nasrullah et al., 2012), a notable proportion of girls endure the detrimental phenomenon of underage marriage (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Child marriage disproportionately affects females from socioeconomically disadvantaged, less educated households residing in rural regions. It is associated with frequent and quick births, unplanned pregnancies, and induced abortions. These variables augment the likelihood of health complications and mortality for adolescent females who assume the role of motherhood in Pakistan (Nasrullah et al., 2014). The research undertaken by Nasrullah et al. (2014) unveiled a noteworthy association between child marriage and an elevated likelihood of suffering from diarrhoea, along with heightened rates of death among children under the age of 5 and infants in Pakistan. The study conducted by Nasrullah et al. (2013) found a significant association

between women who were married at a young age and a decreased likelihood of obtaining prenatal care from qualified healthcare providers. These women were also more likely to receive delivery assistance from unskilled medical providers and give birth at home. Regrettably, these conditions frequently resulted in medical consequences, such as postpartum haemorrhage, as documented by Shah et al. (2010).

Multiple studies suggest a correlation between women delaying marriage and the subsequent attainment of long-term economic and social empowerment. The aforementioned investigations encompass the study undertaken by Dhamija and Roy Chowdhury (2018), Field and Ambrus (2008), Gordon B. Dahl (2010), Wang and Wang (2017), and Yount et al. (2018). Child marriage has been discovered to exert an influence on the outcomes of child development. Chari et al. (2017) present evidence indicating that when Indian women delay marriage, it results in significantly enhanced child health and scholastic achievements. Early marriage of females has an adverse effect on the birth weight and weight-for-height ratio of offspring, as well as their educational accomplishments.

### **Culture as a Cause of Early Female Marriages and Its Impacts on Education**

Cultural standards and the resulting social pressure have a key role in the prevalence of underage marriage. There is a prevailing consensus that females will enter into marriage, and an increasing number of parents are taking on the task of arranging it. Parents must ensure their daughter remains chaste till the moment of her marriage. A teenage female respondent in the Plan International study conducted in Bangladesh expressed that rumors would circulate about an unmarried girl. Should suspicions arise regarding her involvement in extramarital relationships, her reputation would be severely affected. Males have more capabilities to manage it. He may consistently be in solitude (Kabir et al. 2019; Plan International, 2015).

Communities worldwide persist in practising and maintaining discriminatory customs and practices that specifically target women and girls. In Bangladesh, there is a perception that female children impose a financial strain, while male children are regarded as a means of generating cash. The level of dedication was reduced for adolescent female parents as a result of marriage. The occurrence of gender inequality is attributed to the practice of early marriage, as it deprives young brides of experiencing equitable relationships (Kabir et al., 2019; Plan International, 2015; Nasrin and Rahman, 2012). Marshan et al. (2010) describe individuals who have a deep appreciation and knowledge of Java programming, and who demonstrate a mature and professional demeanour. The majority of individuals have the belief that by relinquishing their children at a young age, they are conforming to customary practices. Parents are concerned that if they refuse a man's proposal for their daughter, she may face negative consequences and remain unmarried. The parents will comply with the proposal by increasing the legal age of their children, allowing them to marry even if they are still underage (Muhith et al., 2018).

### **Methodology**

The techniques employed to examine and evaluate the research problem have been explained in the methodology chapter. The rationale is provided for the utilization of specific method techniques in selecting, documenting, processing, and analyzing data to understand the issue. This enables researchers and readers to assess the overall soundness and dependability of a study. (Kallet, 2004). Therefore, given the research objectives and the characteristics of the study, a Quantitative research methodology was utilized for this inquiry. The objective of the study is to ascertain the determinants cultural causes' early marriage among females and its impact on their educational attainment in the Charsadda District. The following strategies were employed to get the desired outcomes.

**Nature of the Study**

This study employed quantitative research methodology. In light of this paradigm, the researcher endeavoured to identify the factors contributing to early marriages in Pakhtun community and examine their effects on girls' education.

**Study Design**

Cross-sectional study design, the most appropriate design to thoroughly examine a proper problem perspective or phenomenon, was adopted for the concern study. (Babie, 1989). The research design comprises the following elements:

**Universe of the Study**

The selection of a research universe is not based on specific criteria, but rather determined by the nature and scope of the investigation. The study universe may exhibit either comparable or dissimilar traits (Creswell, 2014). Due to funding constraints and time limitations, the researcher is unable to collect data from the entire population. Therefore, the District Charsadda has been chosen as the study's universe. The Charsadda District is partitioned into three Tehsils, specifically: Charsadda, Tangi, and Shabqadar. Tehsil Tangi was deliberately chosen for this study among these Tehsils.

Four Union Councils were selected for data collection, taking into consideration the constraints of the study. In addition, among Village council was purposefully selected in each Union Council. The Village Council is selected based on the issue of early female marriages and its detrimental effects on their education.

**Sample Size**

The study universe, consisting of four Village councils, had a population of 34,395 households as recorded in the 2017 census by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Based on Slovin's (1960) formula, a sample size of 395 was chosen from the total 34395 households.

**Data Collection**

The data were gathered using an interview schedule that was designed based on the conceptual framework of the study. The interview schedule underwent a pre-test with 25 respondents to eliminate any ambiguous or confusing questions and to assess the reliability of the research instrument.

**Data Analysis**

Research data analysis is the process employed by researchers to transform data into a coherent story and analyze it in order to acquire knowledge, as stated by LeCompte and Schensul (2015). The data analysis in this study was performed utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data underwent both univariate and bivariate analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted with consideration for the following principles of research ethics.

1. The interview schedule was scrutinized by the topic expert to ensure the exclusion of any contentious questions.
2. The respondents were asked for their consent beforehand.
3. In consideration of the area's cultural sensitivity, the data collection procedure exclusively involved female respondents.

**Data analysis**

The data was analyzed into univariate and Bi- Variate as presented below.

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution Regarding Cultural Factors of Early Marriages**

| S. No | Statement  | Yes             | No             | Don't Know   | Total         |
|-------|--|-----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1     | Son preferences over daughter in familial matters is responsible for girls' early marriages    | 380<br>(96.2%)  | 4<br>(1.0%)    | 11<br>(2.8%) | 395 (100%)    |
| 2     | Patriarchy is responsible for girls' early Marriages   | 386<br>(97.7%)  | 1<br>(.3%)     | 8<br>(2.0%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 3     | Society taunt the girls if they do not get married early                                       | 391<br>(99.0%)  | 3<br>(.8%)     | 1<br>(0.3%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 4     | Women are not autonomous in their marital Decisions  | 391 99.0        | 1<br>(.3%)     | 3<br>(0.8%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 5     | The traditional female role model is too strong.   | 391 99.0        | 1<br>(.3%)     | 3<br>(0.8%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 6     | Women are considered for household Activities  | 376<br>(95.2%)  | 18<br>(4.6%)   | 1<br>(0.3%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 7     | Men Prejudice against women is a cause of their early marriage                                 | 345<br>(87.3%)  | 50<br>(12.7%)  | 0<br>(0%)    | 395<br>(100%) |
| 8     | There is practice of early marriage in Society   | 378<br>(95.7 %) | 3<br>(8%)      | 14<br>(3.5%) | 395<br>(100%) |
| 9     | Girls do early marriages because of the fear that they will not be accepted for late marriages | 369<br>(93.4%)  | 15<br>(3.8%)   | 11<br>(2.8%) | 395<br>(100%) |
| 10    | Controlling of young married females are Easy  | 83<br>(21.0%)   | 276<br>(69.9%) | 36<br>(9.1%) | 395<br>(100%) |

The table shows that 380 respondents, accounting for 96.2% of the total, agreed that sons' preferences over daughters in household problems contribute to girls' early marriages. In contrast, 4 respondents (1.0%) disagreed, and 11 respondents (2.8%) were unclear. Child marriage is widespread in South Asia and Africa, where a significant percentage of girls, ranging from 50 to 70%, are married before they turn 18 (Khanna, Verma & Weiss, 2013). Although both girls and men are affected, females bear a more significant burden, leading to a curtailed childhood, compromised bodily and emotional health, and a violation of their rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, persons have the right to engage into marriage of their own volition, free from any kind of force. In addition, the respondents were queried regarding the influence of Patriarchy in enabling the occurrence of early marriages for females. The statement was agreed upon by around 97.7% of the respondents, while only 0.3% opposed, and 2.0% were uncertain.

The data from the table indicates that 391 respondents, accounting for 99.0% of the total, agreed with the statement that society criticizes females who do not marry early. In contrast, 1 respondent (0.3%) disagreed, and another 1 respondent (0.3%) expressed uncertainty on the statement.

In addition, the table reveals that 391 respondents, accounting for 99.0% of the total, agreed with the assertion that women lack autonomy in their marriage decisions. Only 1 respondent, representing 0.3%, disagreed, while 3 respondents, making up 0.8%, were unclear about the statement. These traditional behaviors have strong foundations in cultures, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas inside urban regions. The practice of exchange marriage in Pakistan has led to a rise in the incidence of domestic violence (Zaman, 2012).

Furthermore, the respondents were asked if they believe that the influence of the traditional female role model is excessively powerful. Out of the responses, 391 (99.0%) agreed with the statement, 1 (0.3%) disagreed, and 3 (0.8%) were unsure about the statement.

Furthermore, a significant majority of 376 respondents (95.2%) agreed that women are mostly associated with home duties. In contrast, 18 respondents (4.6%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (0.3%) expressed uncertainty regarding this statement. Individuals opt for this approach in order to maintain familial and societal approval, and to prevent engaging in behavior that could lead to social stigma and communal disapproval. Furthermore, some influential cultural elements such as Watta-Satta, Vani, and childhood participation play a significant role in facilitating early marriages in Pakistan. Watta-Satta is a practice that involves the reciprocal exchange of brides between two families. Vani is a traditional practice observed in the tribal regions of Pakistan, whereby young girls are compelled to enter into marriage with members of different clans as a means to settle disputes. These social attitudes exert strong pressure on girls to marry at an early age (Awaz Foundation Pakistan, 2010).

The data presented in the table indicates that 345 respondents, accounting for 87.3% of the total, agreed that men's bias against women contributes to early marriage. Conversely, 50 respondents, representing 12.7% of the total, disagreed with this assertion.

In addition, when the respondents were queried on the prevalence of early marriage in society, 378 (95.7%) of the respondents affirmed the statement, while 3 (8%) disagreed, and 14 (3.5%) expressed uncertainty over the statement. The nation has been plagued by the persistent issue of child marriage. Recent data indicates that Pakistan's poverty rate has escalated to a perilous level of 31.3%. According to recent research, a significant worry for individuals is the marriage of their children. This is because impoverished families seldom send their children to school, resulting in boys starting work at a young age. Meanwhile, girls in these disadvantaged families are trained for domestic duties from a young age and often marry early. Feminist economists contend that the Pakistani government must address the educational sector, with a particular emphasis on enhancing women's education. Additionally, they assert that the government should eradicate any barriers that hinder females from attending school (Klasen, 2008).

Furthermore, a significant majority of 369 respondents (93.4%) expressed agreement with the notion that girls engage in early weddings due to the apprehension of not being approved for later marriages. Conversely, 15 respondents (3.8%) disagreed, and 11 respondents (2.8%) were uncertain regarding this statement. In addition, a majority of the respondents (69.9%) concurred with the assertion that it is easy to govern young married ladies. Conversely, a smaller percentage (21.0%) disagreed with this statement, while a minority (9.1%) expressed uncertainty. Many parents withdraw their daughters from school due to the financial burden of education and concerns about safety, which they perceive as incompatible with the life of females. They seek to protect their daughters by arranging marriages. It is necessary to address the reasons why families choose to keep their children away from school. They believe that they can provide their children with all the necessary resources and a secure life without formal education. It is important



to provide suitable instruction that meets their specific needs and find ways to overcome the financial obstacles that prevent many girls from attending school (Khokhar,2018).

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution Regarding Effect on Girls' Education.**

| S. No | Statement  | Yes            | No             | Don't Know    | Total         |
|-------|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1     | Do you think that due to lack of financial resources girls do not continue their education                         | 361<br>(91.4%) | 15<br>(3.8%)   | 19<br>(4.8%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 2     | Women are not the earning partner that's why they do not decide regarding the future of their daughters' education | 288<br>(72.9%) | 74<br>(18.7%)  | 33<br>(8.4%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 3     | Due to the pre-determined cultural values regarding women restrict them from education                             | 308<br>(78.0%) | 74<br>(18.7%)  | 13<br>(3.3%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 4     | The illiterate mother/father does not support the education of females   | 236<br>(59.7%) | 156<br>(39.5%) | 3<br>(0.8%)   | 395<br>(100%) |
| 5     | The negative attitude of in-laws is responsible for girls drop out of Schools                                      | 349<br>(88.4%) | 35<br>(8.9%)   | 11<br>(2.8%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
| 6     | Lack of parental attention on their daughter education at home   | 391<br>(99.0%) | 3<br>(0.8%)    | 1<br>(0.3%)   | 395<br>(100%) |
| 7     | Females are considered as marginalized segment of society and therefore, excluded from important                   | 341<br>(86.3%) | 35<br>(8.9%)   | 19<br>(4.8%)  | 395<br>(100%) |
|       | Matters  |                |                |               |               |
| 8     | Non-preference of girls in co-educational institutions   | 381<br>(96.5%) | 3<br>(0.8%)    | 11<br>(2.85%) | 395<br>(100%) |
| 9     | The education of girl-child is being hindered by traditional practices in this community                           | 367<br>(92.9%) | 0<br>(0.0%)    | 28<br>(7.1%)  | 395<br>(100%) |

Table 4.8 illustrates the relationship between girls' discontinuation of school and the absence of adequate financial means. Out of the total respondents, 361 (91.4%) agreed with the statement, 15 (3.8%) disagreed, and 19 (4.8%) had a different opinion. A significant number of parents opt to

remove their girls from school owing to the financial strain of education and concerns over safety, which they perceive as incompatible with the lifestyles of females. They want to protect their daughters by arranging marriages for them. It is necessary to address the reasons why families choose to keep their children away from school. They believe that by doing so, they can provide their children with all the necessary resources and a secure life without formal education. It is important to provide suitable instruction that meets their specific needs and find ways to overcome the financial obstacles that prevent many girls from attending school (Khokhar, 2018).

The table illustrates that respondents were queried about the correlation between women's lack of financial contribution in homes and their limited decision-making power in regards to their daughters' schooling. Out of all the respondents, 288 individuals, this makes up 72.9% of the total, agreed with the statement. Conversely, 74 respondents, representing 18.7% of the respondents, disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 33 respondents, making up 8.4% of the respondents, were unclear about the statement. The

nation has been plagued by persistent issues of child marriage. Recent data indicates that Pakistan's poverty rate has escalated to a perilous level of 31.3%. According to recent research, a primary worry for individuals is the marriage of their children. This is due to the fact that impoverished families seldom send their children to school, resulting in boys starting work at a young age. Conversely, girls in these disadvantaged families are trained for household chores from a young age and often marry early. Feminist economists contend that the Pakistani government must address the educational sector, with a particular focus on enhancing women's education. Additionally, they advocate for the eradication of all barriers that hinder girls' access to schooling (Klasen, 2008). Furthermore, the data also demonstrates that respondents were queried on whether predetermined cultural attitudes pertaining to women impede their access to education. Out of the respondents, 308 (78.0%) agreed with the statement, 74 (18.7%) disagreed, and 13 (3.3%) were uncertain about it. In Pakistan, child marriage is predominantly associated with traditional practices, cultural norms, and customary traditions. It can also be affected by the resolution of debts or the exchange of daughters through rituals such as "Vani," "Swara," or "Watta Satta," as well as other traditions like "Pait lekhi," when a girl is betrothed before birth or while still in her mother's womb (Awaz Foundation Pakistan, 2010).

The chart also reveals that the respondents were surveyed regarding whether parents who are illiterate do not provide support for the education of females. The findings indicate that 236 respondents, accounting for 59.7% of the total, agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 156 respondents, representing 39.5%, disagreed with it. A small proportion of 3 respondents, equivalent to 0.8%, were unclear about the statement.

Child marriage in Pakistan is impacted by cultural standards, tribal customs, and exchange marriage, in addition to poverty. However, researchers assert that poverty is the most significant issue among them. Furthermore, in the northern regions of the country, there exists a historical practice of receiving monetary compensation in return for marrying underage females. The rationale behind this tradition is rooted in the perception of girls as a liability, leading families to expedite their daughters' marriages at a tender age (Awaz Foundation Pakistan, 2010).

Moreover, the data shows that respondents were queried about whether the unfavorable disposition of their in-laws contributes to the discontinuation of females' education. Out of the total respondents, 349 (88.4%) agreed with the statement, 35 (8.9%) disagreed, and 11 (2.8%) were undecided. Research has shown a clear and direct link between marrying at a young age and achieving a lesser level of schooling. UNICEF reports that 21% of adolescent females in Pakistan enter into marriage before reaching the age of 18, while 3% get married under the age of 15. In 2018, research found that 53.7% of teenage females between the ages of 15 and 19 had not had any formal schooling. The data from UNICEF (2018) reveals a significant issue: the enrollment rates for primary, middle, and secondary school are 54%, 21%, and 13% respectively. Article 25-A of the constitution of Pakistan guarantees free education to all individuals between the ages of 5 and 16. Regrettably,

the prospect of completing 12 years of schooling remains an unattainable goal for the majority of females in Pakistan.

In addition, the table shows that respondents were asked about the impact of insufficient parental attention on their daughters' education at home. Out of the total respondents, 391 (99.0%) agreed with the statement, 3 (0.8%) disagreed, and 1 (0.3%) were undecided. The nation has been plagued by the persistent issue of child marriage. Recent data indicates that the poverty rate in Pakistan has escalated to a precarious level of 31.3%. According to recent research, a significant worry for individuals is the marriage of their children. This is due to the observation that impoverished families seldom send their children to school, resulting in boys starting work at a young age. Meanwhile, girls in these disadvantaged families are trained for domestic duties from a young age and often marry early. Feminist economists contend that the Pakistani government must address the educational sector, with a particular focus on enhancing women's education. Additionally, they advocate for the eradication of all barriers that hinder females from attending school (Klasen, 2008).

The table above also illustrates that the respondents were queried on whether females are seen as a marginalized segment of society and consequently excluded from significant affairs. Out of the total respondents, 341 (86.3%) agreed with the statement, 35 (8.9%) disagreed, and 19 (4.8%) were undecided. Women are still confronted with the persistent problems of subjugation and arbitrariness, which are disguised as cultural customs, religious edicts, and gender perception. Discrimination prevails over equality, which is widely promoted as a fundamental pillar of our societal structure. The frequent utilization of discriminatory language to perpetuate gender inequality results in a series of exclusions that extend across several aspects of life. Gender-based violence extends beyond the limits of extreme poverty and social exclusion (Kidvai, 2020).

Furthermore, the respondents were queried about the aversion of females towards coeducational establishments. Out of the total respondents, 381 (96.5%) agreed with the statement, 3 (0.8%) disagreed, and 11 (2.85%) were undecided. The latest study fails to acknowledge the significant advantages of single-sex schools while discussing the incorporation of single-sex classrooms in co-educational settings. The idea that a single-sex class can recreate the experience of a single-sex campus overlooks the significance of a learning environment designed to accommodate the learning styles of females, as well as a social setting that is devoid of competitiveness and social pressure from guys. The academic outcomes are influenced not only by the classroom setting, but also by gender stereotypes and the absence of confidence in girls. Additionally, the coeducational campus atmosphere plays a role in this matter. Co-educational institutions frequently harbor unconscious stereotypes and biases, such as teachers promoting boys' engagement in STEM topics while steering girls towards humanities subjects. Research has also indicated that girls exhibit lower levels of confidence, self-esteem, and body image difficulties (Bridge, 2019).

Furthermore, the data indicates that the respondents were queried on the extent to which traditional customs impede the education of female children in this community. Out of the respondents, 367 (92.9%) agreed with the statement, while 28 (7.1%) were undecided. In Pakistan, various economic, societal, and cultural issues contribute to the challenges encountered by young girls in accessing education. Of all the obstacles, early marriage seems to be the most prominent impediment hindering young ladies from pursuing education. The situation is unfavorable in both urban and rural populations. Adolescent females are getting wedded at an early stage of their lives and subsequently experiencing childbirth, resulting in detrimental consequences for the well-being of both the mother and the offspring. The maternal mortality rate is unacceptably high, presenting a substantial danger to the lives of these little girls. Early marriage is a substantial hindrance to educational prospects. Education not only provides knowledge and skills for personal growth and career advancement, but it also empowers women to assert their rightful place in society and the

process of development. In Punjab, the education of girls is not considered a priority, resulting in limited opportunities for girls to continue their education beyond the fifth grade. Upon getting married, the young lady's enthusiasm waned. In the Multan district, girls from sixth to tenth grade discontinued their education due to marriage and various financial limitations. An alarming tendency observed in both rural and urban settings is the early engagement of girls. According to Saeed (2012), it has been noted that females between the ages of 10 and 16, as well as between the ages of 10 and 13, were married before they finished their education at the school level.

#### Association between Culture and Early Marriage

| S. No | Independent Variable  | Dependent Variable | Statistics                       |
|-------|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1     | In case of more daughters, the parents usually want to get rid of them as early as possible.  | Early marriages    | $X^2 = 12.318$ a<br>$P = 0.015$  |
| 2     | There is no one to support them if death of breadwinner in the family occurs.                 |                    | $X^2 = 156.193$ a<br>$P = 0.000$ |
| 3     | Son preferences over daughter in familial matters are responsible for girl's early marriages. |                    | $X^2 = 52.632$ a<br>$P = 0.000$  |
| 4     | Patriarchy is responsible for girls' early marriages.   |                    | $X^2 = 32.526$ a<br>$P = 0.000$  |
| 5     | Society taunt the girls if they do not get married early.                                     |                    | $X^2 = 50.999$ a<br>$P = 0.000$  |
| 6     | Women are not autonomous in their marital decisions.  |                    | $X^2 = 13.461$ a<br>$P = 0.000$  |

This table illustrates the investigation of the correlation between several assertions (independent variables) and the indexed dependent variable "Early marriage." Below is a detailed clarification for each statement:

The remark implies that an increase in the number of daughters within a family leads parents to actively pursue their daughters' marriage at a young age. The chi-square test reveals a statistically significant correlation ( $p = 0.015$ ), indicating that there is substantial evidence supporting a link between having a higher number of daughters and the inclination to arrange marriages at an early age.

The statement suggests that the absence of financial support from the primary income earner upon their death results in individuals getting married at a young age. The elevated chi-square statistic and negligible p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ) demonstrate a robust and statistically significant correlation between the lack of financial assistance from the breadwinner and the prevalence of early marriages.

The remark implies that a bias towards male offspring in familial affairs adds to the occurrence of early marriages for girls. The statistical analysis demonstrates a substantial correlation ( $p = 0.000$ ), affirming the notion that desires for male children contribute to the prevalence of early marriages.

This statement suggests that the occurrence of early marriages for girls is influenced by

patriarchal values. The chi-square test demonstrates a highly significant connection ( $p = 0.000$ ), providing evidence that patriarchal structures are correlated with the prevalence of early marriages.

The remark implies that cultural coercion, manifested as verbal insults, promotes the practice of early marriages for girls. The statistical analysis reveals a substantial correlation ( $p = 0.000$ ), affirming the notion that societal attitudes have an impact on the choice to marry girls at a young age.

The remark implies that societal pressure, manifested through taunting, promotes the practice of early marriages for girls. The statistical analysis reveals a substantial correlation ( $p = 0.000$ ), affirming the notion that societal attitudes have an impact on the choice to marry girls at a young age.

To summarize, each statement is linked to early marriages, and the statistical significance indicates that these characteristics may have a substantial role in the high occurrence of early marriages among females.

#### **Association between Cultural and Societal Factors and EarlyMarriages.**

| S. No | Independent Variable  | Dependent Variable | Statistics                     |
|-------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | The traditional female role model is too strong.  | Early marriages    | $X^2= 50.999$ a<br>$P= 0.000$  |
| 2     | Women are considered for household activities.  |                    | $X^2= 37.434$ a<br>$P= 0.000$  |
| 3     | Men Prejudice against women is a cause of their early marriage.                                 |                    | $X^2= 248.081$ a<br>$P= 0.000$ |
| 4     | There is practice of early marriage in society.   |                    | $X^2= 42.238$ a<br>$P= 0.000$  |
| 5     | Girls do early marriages because of the fear that they will not be accepted for late marriages. |                    | $X^2= 351.259$ a<br>$P= 0.000$ |
| 6     | Controlling of young married females are easy.  |                    | $X^2= 93.680$ a<br>$P= 0.000$  |

This table presents the correlation between different assertions (independent variables) and the indexed dependent variable - early marriage. Below is a breakdown of each statement:

The statement implies that the presence of a powerful and conventional female figure influences the occurrence of early marriages. The chi-square test demonstrates a highly significant association ( $p = 0.000$ ), demonstrating a strong connection between the influence of the conventional female role model and the occurrence of early marriages.

This statement suggests that the perception of women primarily as homemakers is linked to early marriages. The statistical analysis demonstrates a substantial correlation ( $p= 0.000$ ), affirming

the notion that assigning women to conventional home responsibilities may contribute to the prevalence of early marriages. The phrase implies that men's biases towards women contribute to the occurrence of early marriages. The elevated chi-square statistic and the negligible p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ) demonstrate a robust and statistically significant correlation between male discrimination and the prevalence of early marriages.

This remark suggests that the presence of a cultural norm of early marriage is correlated with the occurrence of early marriages. The statistical analysis reveals a substantial correlation ( $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that societal norms or practices play a role in the high occurrence of early marriages.

The remark implies that girls may choose to marry at a young age due to the fear of being rejected for marrying later in life. The elevated chi-square statistics and negligible p-value ( $p = 0.000$ ) demonstrate a robust and statistically significant correlation between this anxiety and the prevalence of early marriages.

This statement suggests a correlation between the ease of controlling young married women and the occurrence of early marriages. The statistical study indicates a strong correlation ( $p = 0.000$ ) between exerting control over young married girls and the occurrence of early marriages. To summarise, each statement is linked to early marriages, and the statistical significance indicates that these characteristics may have a substantial impact on the occurrence of early marriages for females

## **Conclusion**

The current research studied early marriage from various perspectives, causing it, bringing about its consequences, and showing the social dynamics around it, especially, how the aspects of culture, the economy, the community's view of the sexes, and the lack of education keep it going. The results point to the fact that early marriage is still very much a part of the social fabric of many areas, and it is often sanctioned by society's demands, family honor, or financial reasons. Such families are of the opinion that marrying off the daughters at an early age will help them get rid of some of their economic problems, taking care of girls' honor, or letting the family have fewer children to take care of, even if it is against the rights and health of the children involved. The research work also indicated that the impact of early marriage is multi-faceted. The girls' lives filled with early marriages are mostly marked by an interrupted education, fewer job opportunities, and less personal power. Moreover, early childbearing has adverse effects on health—infant and maternal deaths are the major repercussions—because pregnant adolescents are more likely to have complications and even die than adult women. Mentally, the minor brides encounter problems like being cut off from the young people's world around them, squeezed between their parents and the husbands, and not having a say in major life decisions. Furthermore, child marriage entrenches the existing gender discrimination, as girls are not allowed to take part in social, economic, and political matters and thus are not able to break free from the poverty and dependence of their predecessors. The existence of a legal framework and awareness campaigns that target child marriages has yet to bear fruit as the social norms and community pressures continue to overpower those measures, thereby revealing a disconnection between policy and practice. The results imply that it is only through education, community participation, and awareness creation that one will be able to eventually change people's minds about the proper age for marriage and the advantages of delaying marriage. The role of families and community leaders is essential in creating and maintaining environments that support girls' education, personal development, and health as their prime priorities.

To sum up, early marriage is not just an individual or family problem but a societal one that has far-reaching implications for gender equality, health, education, and economic growth. Its solution calls for a multidimensional approach that includes the enforcement of laws, the provision of educational opportunities, raising awareness in communities, and giving financial support to impoverished families. We can only reduce the occurrence of early marriage through joint efforts,

which will enable the girls to enjoy better health, safety, and independence, thus contributing to sustainable social development.

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