



DELAYED MARRIAGE IN PAKISTAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON SOCIETY: A CRITICAL STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF SEERAH OF THE PROPHET (PBUH)

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**DELAYED MARRIAGE IN PAKISTAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON
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Muhammad Khubaib, Syed Bacha Agha, Sabeen Akber

ABSTRACT

Institution of marriage is facing critical crisis all over the world but in Pakistan because of several social and economic reasons marital complications are seriously debatable at national level. One of the biggest conjugal problems is late marriage in Pakistan. Though, Islāmic Law didn't set the exact age of marriage however, in Islāmic Law, nobody can marry unless he/she reached maturity. There are several sociocultural factors which may be the root cause of late marriage. The poor people work hard to settle themselves down and they postponed their weddings till then. Sometimes this process of takes too long to marry and ultimately marriageable age passed away. Delayed marriage causes a lot of social, psychological and health consequences. If one marries at proper age then that individual can save himself from committing sins and other wrongdoings. In this article there would be discussed the social and economic obstacles and so-called cultural customs and rituals to marry at ideal age. It would also discuss an ideal Islāmic wedding model in the light of Qur'ānic doctrine for marriage.

KEYWORDS: Delayed Marriage, Marriage in Islam, Matrimonial Institution, Wedding, Seerah of Prophet

MARRIAGE IN ISLAM AND PRE-ISLAMIC ERA

In the era of negligence a variety of marriages existed. The most common kinds of marriage at that time were known as marriage by capture, marriage by agreement, marriage by mahr, temporary marriage (Mu'ata) and marriage by inheritance.¹ There was no law to watch out the absolute right of a male spouse to divorce his wife. There was no reliability in the conjugal status of a wife. Meticulously, women in those days were not better than the thralls and had no existence of their own in the society. In Arabian marriage law before the rise of Islam, no limits were set on men to marry or divorce. Islamic law bound the men to four wives at one time. As the Holy Quran says:

﴿فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنً وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ﴾²

“Marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four.”

Under the Islamic Law, Matrimonial institution was purified, through which the woman was awarded key position in the marriage and she was somewhat of an interested partner. For example, the dowry, previously valued as a ‘price of bride’ paid to the father, in Islamic Law it became a nuptial gift preserved by the wife as a part of her private property.³

Marriage was no longer regarded as a ‘status’ but rather as a

⁽¹⁾ Shah, N. Women, *The Koran and International Human Rights Law* (Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006), P. 32

⁽²⁾ An-Nisa 4: 3

⁽³⁾ Esposito, John, *What Everyone Needs To Know About Islam* (London: Oxford Press, 2002), P.79

‘contract’ under the Islamic Law. The crucial elements of the marriage contract were now a proposal by the man, an approval by the woman and the implementation of some conditions like the payment of dowry. To execute legal Islamic marriage contract the woman's consent was mandatory and the ‘offer and acceptance’ had to be made in the existence of at least two witnesses.⁴ And in some schools of jurist the consent of the wali (custodian) of the bride is also a condition of Islamic marriage contract. The custodian of the bride is a male relative of the bride, preferably her father. The wali (guardian) of the bride can only be a free Muslim with exceptional cases whereby the bride is Christian or Jewish.⁽⁵⁾

WHAT IS DELAYED MARRIAGE?

Delaying in marriage doesn't have a particular definition. To be precise; it doesn't even have a particular opinion. Some scholars defined delayed marriage as an act of marriage performed at a mature age and according to others delayed marriage can be defined as ‘postponement of the marriage’ or ‘pushing the age at marriage into the late twenties and higher. Obviously, according to the first perspective delayed marriage is not a bad practice and it should be promoted but similarly, according to second opinion delayed marriage is not good practice and it can causes some problems in domestic and social life.

Regarding delayed Marriage, separation point between Islamic approach and non-Islamic approach is that Islamic Law based on planning for resurrection day and on the other hand non-Islamic laws based on

⁽⁴⁾ Esposito, John, *What Everyone Needs To Know About Islam*, P.339

⁽⁵⁾ The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, (Leiden: 1995), Vol. VIII, P.27

worldly benefits and affairs. That's why, delayed marriage campaigns work in non-Islamic western society because they've got some alternative to marriage. Before performing an action, a Muslim has to see that whether it is a sin or not.

Allah almighty said in the Holy Quran:

﴿وَلْيَسْتَغْفِرِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُعْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾⁽⁶⁾

“But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain [from sexual relations] until Allah enriches them from His bounty.”

In another place He stated again:

﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا﴾⁽⁷⁾

“Do not even approach adultery. It is indecent and an evil act.”

And The Messenger of Allah said:

((إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ تُقْبِلُ فِي صُورَةِ شَيْطَانٍ وَتُدْبِرُ فِي صُورَةِ شَيْطَانٍ فَإِذَا أَبْصَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَةً فَلْيَأْتِ أَهْلَهُ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يَرُدُّ مَا فِي نَفْسِهِ))⁽⁸⁾

“The woman advances and retires in the shape of a devil, so when one of you sees a woman, he should come to his wife, for that will repel what he feels in his heart.”

But the western world measures everything on base of materialism.

⁶ An-Nur 24: 33

⁷ Al-Isra 17: 32

⁸ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Chapter: Recommendation to the one who sees a woman and is attracted to her..., Hadith #:1403

Events have currently uncovered some western ideologies that are trying to perforate into the Muslim world. There are some modern novelties in the Islamic territory in contrast with the past, people now are practicing and imitating from the western cultures of which are entirely reprehended by the Islamic Law Creator. All the Muslims are emboldened to catch serious mindfulness to marriage at the early age so as to scrap the western and other religion theories of being abandoned and indirectly committing adultery. Live-In-Relationship or Cohabitation is a big reason of delayed marriage in the west. Live-In-Relationship is an arrangement in which two bachelors of opposite sex lives together in a prolonged relationship and having sex which is similar to marriage. In live-in-relationship system, couples cohabit, rather than marry. There is no space for such fornication system in Islamic Law at all.

MARITAL AGE IN PAKISTANI LAW AND ISLAMIC LAW:

Pakistan Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 1929 sets the legal age for marriage to 16 for women and 18 for men.⁹ In May 2017, the National Assembly rejected the draft Child Marriage Restraint Act for the second time. The proposal would have increased the legal age for marriage from 16 to 18 nationwide. The chairman of that time of the committee, Rehman Malik said the bill was contrary to Islamic injunctions.¹⁰ However, Bill initiating harder penalties for marriage under the age of 16 was also adopted. Though, it does not increase the age of marriage to 18.

⁹ <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/147a.html>

¹⁰ DAWN, “*Senate body rejects amendment to child marriage act as un-Islamic*”, October 12, 2017

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In February 2017, the Parliament adopted an amendment to the Penal Code that would toughen punishment against child marriage. Offenders face a minimum of five years in prison and may serve up to 10 years. They also face a fine of up to 1 million rupees.¹¹ In April 2014, the Sindh Assembly unanimously adopted the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, increasing the minimum age of marriage to 18 and making marriage below 18 a punishable offence. A proposed similar nationwide bill was unfortunately struck down by Pakistan's National Assembly in 2014.¹²

Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) did a survey which indicates that in Pakistan delayed marriage increasing with the passing of time. See below table.

Percent of Women by Age at First Marriage ⁽¹³⁾						
Current Age (in 5 year groups)	Number of Respondents			≤19		
	1990-91	2006-07	2012-13	1990-91	2006-07	2012-13
15-19	405	569	605	-	-	-
20-24	1058	1499	2106	19.0	25.8	30
25-29	1461	2007	2724	31.8	40.2	45
30-34	1195	1786	2528	32.8	38	45.3
35-39	1026	1653	2226	36.4	34.5	38.7
40-44	812	1302	1765	37.5	37.2	36.5
45-49	615	1208	1603	43.9	35.2	36.7
Total	6572	10024	13557	30.5	33.4	37.5

Above table shows the data from 1991 to 2013 which indicates that delayed marriage trend keep increasing in Pakistan gradually without

¹¹ The Express Tribune, “Pakistan seeks to curb child, forced marriages with harsher punishment”, Feb.8, 2017

¹² DAWN, “Sindh PA passes landmark bill prohibiting child marriages”, April 29, 2014

¹³ Farooq, Sadaf & Shamas ul Deen, “Trends of Early Marriages in Pakistan; Quantitative Analysis of Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey” Sci.Int. Lahore, 28, no.2, (2016), p.2085

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caring that whether it's early age or 25 plus. Supposedly, if we consider 18 plus to 25 is an ideal age to marry, then 25 plus should be considered as delayed marriage. In the cases of 25 or 30 plus, increasing the ratio of delayed marriage clearly means that now it is a real problem of society.

If we talk about Islamic perspective towards the marriageable age, it would be found that there is consensus among the all schools of jurist that youth genders should be allowed to enter into a connubial contract without giving preference to any sex upon the other. Basically, Islamic law does not set any specific age for a couple to get married whether it would be male or female.¹⁴ Islamic Law left it to every individual and the humanity to assess and opt what will be fit for their occasional needs in a certain environment. The logic behind this silence is that Islamic law is always demand betterment of the people. It doesn't cause any harm or injury to the other party. Notwithstanding, jurists collectively welcome the fact that a young male or female may get with the condition that both of them have already attained the age of puberty.

As in the Holy Quran:

﴿وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ﴾⁽¹⁵⁾

“And when the children among you reach puberty, let them ask permission [at all times] as those before them have done.”

Regarding the perspective of four schools of jurist, both the Shafi'i and the Hanbali School and set the age of the legal capacity to marry at 15

¹⁴ M. Zahraa, Arab Law Quarterly, “the Legal Capacity of Women in Islamic Law”, Vol.11, Issue.3, PP.245-263

¹⁵ An-Nur 24:59

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years for both sexes.¹⁶ While from the Maliki School different statements are found like 16, 17, and 18 even at some place 19 years, but the most authentic statement is 17 years.¹⁷ And Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad from Hanafi School also have opinion that the marriageable age for both sexes is 15 lunar years.¹⁸ In contrast to the other jurists opinion, the Hanafi School assumes that puberty will occur no later than at eighteen years for males and seventeen years for females.¹⁹ All four Muslim schools of jurists agreed on less than 18 to marry for both male and female.²⁰

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Umar who said:

((عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ عَرَضَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمَ أُحُدٍ فِي الْقِتَالِ وَأَنَا ابْنُ أَرْبَعٍ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً فَلَمْ يُجِزْنِي وَعَرَضَنِي يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ وَأَنَا ابْنُ خَمْسٍ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً فَأَجَازَنِي))⁽²¹⁾

“The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) inspected me on the battlefield on the Day of Uhud, and I was fourteen years old. He did not allow me (to take part in the fight). He inspected me on the Day of Khandaq-and I was fifteen

¹⁶ Al Shrini, Muhammad, *Mughni al Muhtaj*, (Beirut: Darul Kutab al Ilmiah, 2000), Voll:4, P.66

¹⁷ Muhammad Bin Abul Rehman Malki, *Mawahibul Jaleel*, (Jordan: Al Radwan, 2010), Voll.5, P.95

¹⁸ Abidin, Amin, *Hashiya ibn Abidin*, (Riyadh: Dar Alim ul Kitab, 2003), Vol.5, P.97

¹⁹ *Al Mosooa Fiqhiyya*, (Kuwait: Ministry of Awqaf & Islamic Affairs, 1983), Vol.8, PP.191-193

²⁰ L. Rosen, *Islamic Law and Society*, “Law and Custom in the Popular Legal Culture of North Africa”, Vol.2, No.2, PP.194-208

²¹ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book on Government, Chapter: The age of responsibility, Hadith# 1868

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yearsold, and he permitted me (to fight).”

Hanafi School of Fiqh provides a verse of the Holy Quran as an evidence that maturity is marriageable age. As Allah said in Quran:

﴿لَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ﴾²²

"Do not handle the property of the orphans except with a good reason until they become mature and strong."

Aforementioned opinion of Muslim School of Jurists shows that marriageable age circulates around 15 to 18 years; it means we can say that most extended age for both the sexes could be considered as 18 to 19 years. Mentioned below hadith is being presented by shafi school of jurist as a proof that 15 year is the age of puberty.

In spite of all that, there is no particular ruling in the Islamic Primary Sources that specifies a particular period for choosing a life and future partner. Principle is that if there is a dispute between a primary source and a secondary source, primary source will always prevail due to the fact that the secondary source derives from it. Authorization of a specific age for marriage is an objectionable idea in Islamic law. This is due to the fact that the messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH) never mentioned the exact age in any of his preaching concerning marriage. Upon this, it is felicitous to endorse that the fixation of age in some Muslims' domain is something that had been launched by their own culture and not by Islamic law. Therefore, it is laudable to ratify that Islamic law empowers people with unconditional option of choosing their

²² Al-An'am 6: 152

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future associates at their suitable age.

As God almighty stated that:

﴿انكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ﴾²³

“Marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four.”

In another place, He said again:

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾⁽²⁴⁾

“And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and knowing.”

Specific age for a couple to go into a matrimonial contract in the Pakistan Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) sounds violating people’s personal privilege. If there would be a situation by which both adults of opposite gender couldn’t resist their feelings before the specified age in the local law, at that time, early marriage that is been defend by rational and solid evidence in Islamic law should be opted abruptly or approval should be sanctioned to both parties to overshoot the normal official period.

²³ An-Nisa 4: 3

²⁴ An-Nur 24: 32

PUBERTY AGE IN PAKISTAN:

Puberty age in Pakistan revolves around 10 to 15 years.²⁵ In a research paper, investigation about puberty age in Pakistan is being made. Research result shows that male reached their puberty age from the period of 10 to 15 years and female reached their puberty age from 9 to 14 years.²⁶

The Aga Khan University Hospital described it as:

“Puberty is the name for the time when your child's body begins to develop and change as he or she moves from being a child to an adult. Usually, puberty starts between ages 8 and 13 in girls and ages 9 and 15 in boys.”²⁷

Maulana Muhammad Khan Shirani chairperson of The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) observed that a girl reaches puberty at the age of nine while boys reach puberty at 12. Nonetheless, the agreed age for puberty is 15.²⁸

PAKISTANI MARRIAGE IN CONTEMPORARY ERA:

The economic condition of the planet in this contemporary world had completely get people ready physically and logically so as to immolate their relevant souls on how to advance in life. This trend

²⁵ <http://www.learnpakistan.com/health-tips-in-urdu/advice-for-teenagers-advice-for-parenting-about-puberty-in-male-and-females.html>

²⁶ Ghulam Rasool, “*Puberty growth spurt age in local population – A study*” Pakistan Oral & Dental Journal Vol.31, Issue.1 (Islamabad: June 2011), P.82

²⁷ <https://hospitals.aku.edu/pakistan/diseases-and-conditions/Pages/early-or-delayed-puberty.aspx>

²⁸ The Express Tribune, “*Council meeting: Agreed age for puberty is 15, says CII*”, May 22, 2014

influences the many Pakistanis of today to the degree of not choosing marriage the way it had been applauded by their predecessors. Due to this inclination, first priority of many Pakistanis now became work and study over conjugal relationship. This behavior led them to the practice of adjourning marriage into an overdue period. Therefore, the age above 25 for women and 28 to 30 for men would be considered as crossing point over the normal age of marriage in the Pakistani culture.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ABOUT DELAYED MARRIAGE:

It is tremendously significant for Muslims to get married when they came their mature age (after the puberty period). In Islam, marriage holds massive significance and has been given a holy figure. Each Muslim man and woman is well-ordered to make the most of their wedding and value their spouses for as long as they alive. However, Islam also forbids the delay in this positive tie.

God Almighty said in the Holy Quran:

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۖ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾²⁹

“And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and knowing.”

What a wonderful reflection for the people who wait, for no reason, to get married. Allah has promised in His word that He will enrich

²⁹An-Nur 24: 32

the poor with favors so it is alright to get married even if you are poor. For Allah can do anything. So believe in Allah and take the step to marry. The Messenger of Allah said:

((الكَاحُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَتَزَوَّجُوا فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِّرُكُمْ الْأُمَمَ وَمَنْ كَانَ ذَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيَنْكِحْ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّيَامِ فَإِنَّ الصَّوْمَ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ))⁽³⁰⁾

“Marriage is part of my sunnah, and whoever does not follow my sunnah has nothing to do with me. Get married, for I will boast of your great numbers before the nations. Whoever has the means, let him get married, and whoever does not, then he should fast for it will diminish his desire.”

Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

أَنَّ سَبْنَ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، يَقُولُ: جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةُ رَهْطٍ إِلَى بُيُوتِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوهَا، فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أَصَلِّيَ اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَرَلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا، فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَقَالَ: ((أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا، أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْفُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي))³¹

“A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of

³⁰Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn e Majah*, The Chapters on Marriage, Hadith# 1846

³¹Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Marriage is recommended for the one who desires it..., H: 1401

Muhammad bin Ismaeel, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Awakening the desire for marriage, Hadith# 5063

the Prophet (PBUH) asking how the Prophet (PBUH) worshipped (Allah), and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where we are from the Prophet (PBUH) as his past and future sins have been forgiven." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever." Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he, who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me. (Not one of my followers)"

Prophet of God Almighty Muhammad (PBUH) said that if anyone of you can afford economically he must have to marry as soon as he can. He (PBUH) said:

((مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ ذَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَا فَالصَّوْمُ لَهُ وَجَاءُ))³²

“Whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity, and whoever cannot, then fasting will be a

³²An-Nasa'i, Sunan an-Nasa'i, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Encouragement To Marry, Hadith# 3206

restraint (wija') for him.”

Apostle of Allah said that whoever among you is able to marry, should marry abruptly as He (PBUH) speaking to the youth of the Muslim world:

((يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ³³))

“O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry, should marry, and whoever is not able to marry, is recommended to fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power.”

Narrated by Sa`id bin Jubair:

((عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، قَالَ قَالَ لِي ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ هَلْ تَزَوَّجْتَ قُلْتُ لَا. قَالَ فَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنْ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَكْثَرُهَا نِسَاءً³⁴))

“Ibn e Abbas asked me, "Are you married?" I replied, "No." He said, "Marry, for the best person of this (Muslim) nation (i.e., Muhammad) of all other Muslims, had the largest number of wives.”

Therefore, we should get married as soon as possible in order to avoid falling into sin. We are humans, and with limited self-control. That is why Allah has made rules that we ought to follow. Every Sunnah of the

³³Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Marriage is recommended for the one who desires it..., Hagith# 1400
Muhammad bin Ismaeel, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Whoever is able to marry, should marry, Hadith# 5065

³⁴Muhammad bin Ismaeel, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Marriage, Chapter: About (marrying) several women Hadith# 5069

Prophet has a reason, getting married early solves the problem of committing major sins and we must embrace it openly.

CAUSES OF DELAYED MARRIAGE AMONG PAKISTANIS PRIORITIZE EDUCATION OVER THE MARRIAGE:

The present craze in town is that the more you try your capability to the happening contemporary issues, the more you will be able to enhance your bank balance. This is because the advancement of modern technology in every part of the world is really calling for expansion of ideas and promotion of creativities. For this sake, it is now a belief that one cannot be compatible with the current development throughout the globe without the acquisition of a reasonable knowledge. Because of this, youths of nowadays in Pakistan are sort of struggling on how to get higher education so as to get a suitable job and to groom their individual personalities. This practice made them urge to compete in the schooling. Thus, some of them precede their education till PhD level. In Pakistani Educational system, you have to surf your best twenty five years to complete your PhD. Normally, in Pakistan, minimum age to get PhD degree is 28 to 30. Though, Islam awarded high position to get the education and parents are asked to educate their children.

As Apostle of Allah said;

³⁵((مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ جَارِيَةٌ فَعَالَهَا، فَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهَا ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهَا وَتَزَوَّجَهَا، كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرَانِ))

“He, who has a slave-girl and educates and treats her nicely and then manumits and marries her, will get a double

³⁵Muhammad bin Ismaeel, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Manumission of Slaves, Chapter: The superiority of him who teaches his slave-girl good manners, Hadith# 2544

reward.”

But the argument is still there if study can be continued after marriage or not. There should be encouragement to develop an environment where education couldn't be a problem after the marriage.

As the Holy Quran says:

﴿فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنً وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ﴾³⁶

“Marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four.”

In this verse, it's worthy to note that the imperative sentence is used to express the importance of Nikah (marriage).

Thus, It is apposite to draw a conclusion that placing and prioritizing Education before marital relationship is a great mistake in the life of anyone who opt to do so because this attitude would take to the endless journey where after completion the study, next step must be to seek a proper job.

SETTLING DOWN OF MEN BEFORE MARRIAGE:

Men predominantly are known to be very active in academic works, office jobs, administrative occupation, political appointment and the likes, however, in Pakistan, the understanding of such dogmas is in the opposite side whereby the population of female participating in different kind of meaningful jobs are more than the male population partaking in that similar occupation. Although, there is a probability that someone who

³⁶ An-Nisa 4: 3

seek for employment before marriage will have the opportunity of gathering some income for investment of which may later serve him/her the purpose of managing his/her household for a long-term period.

God almighty said in the Holy Quran:

﴿اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾³⁷

“God grants sustenance (without account) to anyone He wants.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

﴿إِيَّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ فَإِنَّ نَفْسًا لَنْ تَمُوتَ حَتَّى تَسْتَوْفِيَ رِزْقَهَا وَإِنْ أبطَأَ عَنْهَا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ خُذُوا مَا حَلََّ وَدَعُوا مَا حُرِّمَ﴾³⁸

“O people! Fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden.”

It can be concluded that Man’s sustenance is in the hand of the creator, and someone’s portion in this life will never overstep the original owner of a right, in this regard, poverty panic that everyone is trying to avoid will surely locate each individual if it is in one’s destiny, thus, study and work-concern can walk together with nuptial relationship and which is absolutely normal for someone who possess the potentiality and

³⁷ Al-Baqara 2: 212

³⁸ Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn e Majah*, “The Chapters on Business Transactions”, Hadith# 2144

capability, but if somebody cannot combine both concepts together, then the deferment should not exceed the youthful stage of a human being.

MINOR HANG-UPS AMONG SIBLINGS' MARRIAGE:

In many cultures, Parents always have a major role to play when it comes to delaying the marriage of their sons or daughters. Mostly, in the case of a son, it is the establishment of his career and his acquisition of a certain level of income before he is allowed to marry. In the case of a daughter, pickiness based on over-concern for her future financial welfare, completion of her studies or the prerequisite marriage of an older sibling, are quoted as so-called 'justifiable reasons' to delay her marriage.

Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

((يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ³⁹))

“O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry, should marry, and whoever is not able to marry, is recommended to fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power.”

In ideal Islamic society it should be a universal principal whenever a child reaches his/her puberty age and he/she wanted to marry immediately, then no limits should be put on him/her. Even one or more siblings of his/her are delaying their marriage he/she has the permission to

³⁹Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Marriage is recommended for the one who desires it..., Hadith# 1400; Muhammad Bin Ismaeel, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Whoever is able to marry, should marry, Hadith# 5065

marry at any stage.

LIFE EXPERIENCE AT PARENTS' HOME:

In all such cases, when a perfectly normal and healthy young singleton refuses to even discuss the prospect of getting married well past their twenties or thirties, the cause is usually a deep-rooted, psychological one based on their observation of their own parents' marriage, and the priorities about life (and money) that the latter has ingrained into their psyche since early childhood.

That's why The Messenger of Allah said:

40 ((اعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ آبْنَائِكُمْ اَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ ابْنَائِكُمْ))

“Treat your children fairly, treat your children fairly.”

Holy Apostle of Allah Muhammad (PBUH) forbade to celibate as:

((عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ سَعْدًا، يَقُولُ رَدَّ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ التَّبْتُ وَلَوْ أُذِنَ
41 لَهُ لَأَخْتَصِمْنَا))

“I heard Sa'd (b. Abi Waqqas) saying that the idea of 'Uthman b. Maz'un for living in celibacy was rejected (by the Holy Prophet), and if he had been given permission they would have got themselves castrated.”

In another place He (PBUH) said again:

⁴⁰ An-Nasa'i, Sunan an-Nasa'i, The Book of Presents, Chapter: Different Versions Of The Report of Nu'man Bin Bashir Concerning Presents, Hadith# 3687

⁴¹ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Marriage is recommended for the one who desires it..., Hadith# 1402

((عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنِ التَّبَتُّلِ))⁽⁴²⁾

“It was narrated from 'Aishah that the Messenger of Allah forbade celibacy.”

It's attained from aforementioned hadiths that whatever happens life should go on and abandoning marriage is not a good thing to do at all.

PRODIGAL WEDDING CUSTOMS IN PAKISTAN:

We cannot afford to finance your wedding right now. We will need to throw a banquet with at least 100 to 500 guests. We do not have the money for that. You will just have to wait a few more years, until you can chip in to meet the expenses. Many Muslim parents persistently cling to culture-based rituals associated with social status, honor and prestige when it comes to convening their children's weddings. Unnecessary and complex rituals and ceremonies are compulsorily held out of a sense of social obligation, if not to silence the wagging tongues of extended family members.

Islam has not burdened a bride's parents with throwing even one party or banquet neither at her wedding, nor with providing her with a dowry to that displayed to the critical socialite naysayers.

Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) said:

((أُولِمَ وَلَوْ بِشَاةٍ))⁴³

“Give a wedding banquet, (Walima) even with one sheep.”

⁴² An-Nisa'i, *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Prohibition of Celibacy, Hadith# 3212

⁴³ Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari*, Book of Invocations, Chapter of Invocation for a bridegroom, Hadith# 6386

He (PBUH) said “even with one sheep” it clearly indicates that banquet is sunnah but in a simple way, it should be a invocation rather than extravagant banquet party. Sadly, most do these things anyway, out of a sense of social obligation and pressure. Examples of the unnecessary parties thrown by the bride’s family are: the pre marriage henna ceremony (mehndi), and the formal dinner banquet to see off the bride as she goes to her husband’s home for the first time (rukhsati).

In addition, at each of these parties, the number of dishes in the menu, the label and price tag of the bridal dresses, the rent and location of the venue, and the luxury of the look are indulged in for the critical appraisal of the attendees. The sad result is that the timeliness and blessing of the sacred union of marriage is compromised, if not totally sacrificed, in overrating and blowing out of proportion a onetime wedding party: that coveted, picture-perfect, grandiose reception, which is mostly aimed only at dazzling the guests so much that they are rendered absolutely speechless in awe.

PARENTS’ UNNECESSARY EXPECTATION FROM SON:

There are 40 plus single living in our society. While everyone expressed concern for the marriage of their female counterparts, no one seemed too greatly bothered about why these aging bachelors were not getting married. In some cases for parents, son is a safety net for their post retirement old age; whom they believe will replace the father as the primary family breadwinner, and continue to grease his parents’ palms with cash even after he gets married and has children of his own.

﴿يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ﴾⁽⁴⁴⁾

“They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the Hereafter, are unaware.”

Further, they believe that he and his wife will serve them, whereas his sisters might not be able to, as they will have obligations in their own husbands' homes. Muslim parents should strengthen their basic aqeedah, including the unfaltering conviction that any kind of provision that Allah has written for them in their Qadr food, shelter, money, love and care – at any stage in life (either youth or old age) will reach them, no matter what, - whether they have one son, 6 sons, or no children at all.

Allah said:

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ﴾⁴⁵

“God is the best Sustainer.”

And the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

﴿لَوْ أَنَّ قَطْرَةً مِّنَ الرُّقُومِ فَطِرَتْ فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا لَأَفْسَدَتْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مَعَايِشَهُمْ فَكَيْفَ بِمَنْ

يَكُونُ طَعَامُهُ﴾⁴⁶

"If only a drop of Az-Zaqqum were to drip into the abode of the world, it would spoil the peoples' livelihood, so how about the person for whom it is his food?"

EFFECTS OF DELAYED MARRIAGE ON PAKISTANI

⁴⁴ Ar-Rum 30: 7

⁴⁵ Al-Jumu'a 62: 11

⁴⁶ Tirmadhi, *Jami at-Tirmidhi*, the Book on the Description of Hellfire, Hadith# 2585

SOCIETY:

It is apparent that the most appreciable and agreeable marriage one can opt for in Islam is early marriage. This is due to the fact that one who is found seeking for a marital relationship after exhausting their youthful stage commonly encounters several problems which may be unbearable for them to endure its pains. Therefore, medical experts together with Islamic scholars always urge every Muslims to get into the marital dealings before the time against them. However, research shows that there are some challenges that may happen to anyone who fails to abide with these experts' advice, among it are:

Religious Problem: the most important thing for a real Muslim is to always withhold the integrity of their religion in any place or circumstances they may find themselves. A Muslim who opt to use a celibacy life without any cogent reason within the scope of Islamic law has automatically distance him/herself from the religion of Islam in the sense that the person's faith will gradually become weaker to the extent that the person will not mind to violate the laid down rules by the Lord giver. For this sake, a good Muslim who tends to portray their religion from being given a bad name from their actions is strongly urge to get marry at the appropriate time so that they will not be alleged for committing indecent crimes in the community.

Psychological Problem: most people who don't normally get engage at the earlier time usually have mental distraction. For instance, if they had once been in love with a partner previously, but later dissolved the relationship, their thinking will always be that all Men or Women are the same as the one they had a quarrel with, in this regard, they will always behave abnormally to anyone that may come to their way who is

also of the same gender with the one is question. In addition to that, they will always lose focus on anything they are assign to do, this is because the interest and concentration that is supposed to be directed fully to that task will be segregated into many kinds because of the breakup issue that had occurred in there. Upon that, research clearly exposes the reality in having a life partner, someone who had already built a cordial relationship with his/her opposite sex has gain the guaranty of living long, compare to that who tends to continue a celibacy life. The reason behind this philosophy is that the former will easily kill him with a bunch of thinking and depressions. For this sake, people are encouraged to get married so that they will not be attacked by unnecessary miserableness. Therefore, the psychological status of every matured human being will always be active and healthy if a matured person chose to have a life partner with him/her at all time.

Among the illicit acts which Delayed Marriage will also cause is the widespread of fornicating acts in the society. The only way of preventing this act from happening is by educating people about the essence of getting married earlier, this is because a matured person who doesn't have any partner with him/her will not be able to control his/her emotional feelings in the course of seeing any inter-gender constantly, the feelings the person had been witnessing always will eventually lead them to the sense of committing fornication with the inter-partner one day. In the light of this, the attempts of eliminating fornication will be effective and successful if the numbers of valid marriage can be accelerated tremendously.

CONCLUSION

Even if we are stuck in the situation where we have no choice to

believe that the early marriage is a harmful practice, countries like Pakistan still has to follow their own religious, regional and economic pattern where delayed marriage is a bigger problem than the early marriage. But don't misunderstand this with child marriage because Islamic Law strongly condemns the child marriage. As I have discussed above, these are two different things. Postponement of the marriage is considered incongruous in Islam. Because, this ideologies came from the west where having sex before getting married is not a big deal. Thus, people should switch their lonely status to marital life after the achievement of puberty. Since, it's a general consensus among the Sunni four schools of Jurisprudence on the legitimacy of early marriage; this practice is not a new experience in the Islamic history. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had practiced earlier marriage. For this sake, it is appropriate to accept that the conjecture of early marriage is not a new practice within the extent of Islam. Islamic law does not foist any certain age for every man and woman to get into marriage contract, but left it to the society to decide it with the available environment and the dominant norms at that specific time. Nevertheless, in the case of contemporary Pakistan, late marriage have been a serious issue in the society, to avoid adultery and rape incidents early marriage must be encouraged academically, practically, legally, financially and administratively by the government of Pakistan.



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