

Burden of Non-Marriage of Girl Child on Parents: A Case Study of Indian Middle Class Muslim Family

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ABSTRACT

Non-marriage of girl child is a big social problem in India, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Middle class families are the worst victim of this social malady. Although there are several causes of non-marriage, but the prime cause of this is dowry. It has become the precondition for marriage. In some societies, it is taken in cash and in some society, it is taken in kind. As far as Muslim society is concerned, dowry is taken in kind, but in some cases in cash. The parents become frustrated when their girl reach marriageable age. Considering this notion in mind, this study was conducted to assess the level of depression of fathers and mothers who have not married their daughters. For this, 60 fathers and mothers who have married/not married their daughters were selected from Hazairbag district of Jharkhand (India) through purposive sampling technique. The sample was divided into two parts-30 fathers/mothers who had married their all daughters and 30 fathers/mothers who have not married their all daughters. Two scales-Personal Data Sheet (PDS) and Beck Depression Inventory was administered on them. Procured data was analyzed with the help to M, SD and t ratio. It was found that fathers who have married their daughters and not married their daughters are statistically different on level of depression ($t=3.65$). Furthermore, it was also found that mothers who had married their all daughters and not married their all daughters are statistically different on level of depression ($t=2.60$). It means non marriage of daughters imposes depression of father/mothers.

Keywords: *Depression, Father, Mother, Non Marriage.*

Non-marriage is becoming a burning issue in India. In a survey by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in East Asia, except China found that non-marriage is becoming very common (Dommaraju and Jones, 2011). Non-marriage is the byproduct of social and economic factors, irrespective of religion, caste even race. Parents have to face different kinds of problems in settling marriage of their daughters. They have to make equilibrium on caste, economic status, even social status. Marriage especially arranged marriage is still a problem due to different factors. In patriarchal Indian society girl have to depend upon parents even on their personal affairs like marriage. Women rarely have basic right to marry their own choices. They have to depend upon their parents who choose groom in accordance with their own choice and capacity. In such

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process, parents have to face different kinds of problems- economical, social and even cultural. Among these problems, dowry is very dangerous. Dowry is nothing but an amount demanded by groom or groom's family as a precondition for settlement of marriage. The amount of dowry is determined by the status of groom, category of employment, status of groom's family. Groom family's demand is met by bride's family anyhow. If the demands are not fulfilled, marriage does not take place. Middle class and poor families often start planning for their daughter's marriage from the time she is born (Aljazeera, 2022). Dowries can include cash, real estate, cash, jewellery and other material items. Dowry is the dominant form of marriage transaction in the Indian sub-continent (Billig, 1992; Upadhyaya, 1990; Paul, 1986; Caplan, 1984; Caldwell, et al., 1983). The amount of dowry is increasing day by day. Several behavioural scientists have accepted dowry inflation (Epstein, 1973; Srinivas, 1984; Paul, 1985; Upadhyaya, 1990, Billig, 1992). Rao (1993) and Anderson (2003) found evidence of dowry inflation. But this finding has been contradicted by Edmund (200) and Dalmia (2004), Arunachalam and Logan (2008). Parents have to sell their property, ancestral land, etc to marry their girl child. Furthermore, Marriage in India involves heavy expenditure. The bride's family have to bear several kinds of expenses partly raised from family and partly from society. The parents of girl have to meet the expenses beyond their capacity. This creates much stress in parents. The colorful and cacophonous Indian wedding is an occasion after marked by thousands of guests, lavish Banquets and venues and brides and groom kitted out in eye-popping costumes and jewellery (Aljazeera, 2022). Beyond the influence of unrealistic weddings and of the grimiest aspect of a culture to over consumption is social malaise of the dowry. National Crime Records Bureau states that at every hour an Indian woman is driven to suicide or is murdered for dowry. Every four minutes, a woman faces cruelty from her in laws or husband (Aljazeera, 2022). According to a research by Pargati Gramodyog Evam Samaj Kalyan Sansthan (PGS)- a pan India non-project which focuses on the intergenerational slavery of marginalized communities more than 6 percent of Indian families turn to money lenders to borrow funds for wedding ceremonies. Kanyadaan-India Foundation-a pan India non-project helps poor families to marry their daughters in a dignified way. This organization supports the girls and her family by bearing all expenses of the wedding so that dowry and suicide due to lack of fund for marriage do not happen.

The concept of knowledge is also responsible behind this. A girl candidate is given to a suitable candidate. One who performs Kanyadan- ultimate puny for his next birth. This notion creates this kind of feeling in patriarchal society (Kindo, 2017). Indian Muslims too are not unaffected. In Islam, there is no concept of dowry. Despite there are a large number of customary practices which are against Islamic rule and are prevalent among a large section of Muslims. Demand of dowry and some other marriage related practices are worst of them. Muslim society is also witnessing dowry. Furthermore, extravagant spending in marriage is against Islam. According to Islamic rule, ideally a marriage partner should be selected on the basis of his or her piety and not on the basis of wealth, lineage or physical beauty or charm. It is tragic that quantum of wealth including amount of dowry is a major consideration for some people in their choice of marriage partner (Nadvi, 2021). Demanding any money or other such wealth from his wife or her family is not permissible under Islamic rule. Procurement of anything in cash or kind from bride's family is completely forbidden under Islamic rule. Many middle-class families today live under the burden of huge and completely unnecessary expenses related to marriage of their daughter (Nadvi, 2021). Aljazeera sites some cases of individual effort just like Hammad Rahamn- the CEO of Nikah is populating sustainable and minimalist wedding warning people not to overspend. The parents whether male or female are anxious about marriage of their daughters. They live in

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continuous state of tension which ultimately converts in depression. Depression is a state that is manifested by depression episodes and characteristics that may last for at least two or longer (Santrock, 2003). The major symptoms of depression are irritability, difficulty in school, changes in sleep habits, feelings of persistent sadness and worthlessness. There is decrease interest in daily activities and responsibilities (Kulashekara and Kumar, 2015). Keeping this view in mind, it was decided to assess the depression level of parents who have married/not married their daughters.

Aim:

This work have been done with following aims.

1. To measure the depression level of fathers who have married their daughters.
2. To assess the depression level of fathers who have not married their daughters.
3. To compare the depression level of fathers who have married/not married their daughters.
4. To assess the depression level of mothers who have married their daughters.
5. To assess the depression level of mothers who have not married their daughters.
6. To compare the depression of mothers who have married/not married their daughters.

Considering above aims, following hypotheses were formulated.

H₁. The depression level of fathers who have not married their daughters will be higher than the fathers who have married their daughters.

H₂. The mothers who have not married their daughters will have more depression than mothers who has married their all daughters.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 60 male/female parents was prepared.

Sample area:

Sample area was Hazaribag district of Jharkhand.

Sampling technique:

Purposive sampling technique was adopted.

Sample distribution:

The sample was divided into two parts-Parents who have married their all daughters (30) and parents who have not married their all daughters (30).

Inclusion criteria:

1. The fathers/mothers had their own children.
2. The health of fathers/mothers were normal.
3. The fathers/mothers were from Hazaribag and Chatra district of Jharkhand, India.
4. The fathers/mothers were first spouse.
5. The age of parents were from 50 to 65.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Handicapped fathers/mothers were excluded.
2. Death of first degree relative in the last one year were excluded.
3. Parents suffering from chronic disease like AIDS, Cancers, Hepatitis B were excluded.

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Distribution of sample

Exhibit – 1

| | Male | Female | Total |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| Parents who have married their daughter. | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| Parents who have not married daughter | 15 | 15 | 30 |

Tools used:

- **Personal Data Sheet:** A semi-structure Performa was prepared by researcher to collect demographic information like name, age, education, residence, socio-economic status and type of family, etc.
- **Beck Depression Inventory:** This inventory was used to measure the depression of the parents. It consists of 21 items with four points rating scale. It has been developed by Beck.

Procedure

The data collection in this present study was done in two phases. In first phase, the researcher demarcated the sample from the proposed area and their consent was taken. In second phase, all scales were administered and data was collected and tabulated.

Statistical Analysis:

After collection the procured data, analysis was done with the help of mean, SD and t-ratio.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This work was done to assess the depression of the fathers and mothers who have married or not married their daughters. The analysis of data was done theme wise.

Depression level of fathers who have married/not married their daughters:

Considering above aims, the depression level of fathers who have married/not married their daughters was measured. Procured data was analyzed with the help of M, SD and t ratio and arranged in table 1.

Table 1 (N, M, SD and t-ratio of depression of fathers who have married/not married their daughters)

| Sample | Status of daughters | N | M | SD | t-ratio | P |
|---------|---------------------|----|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Fathers | Married | 15 | 18.06 | 8.5 | 3.65 | .01* |
| | Not married | 15 | 30.30 | 14.83 | | |

*Significant on .01 level.

Considering above table 1, it is observed that t-ratio of depression between fathers who married and not married their daughters is 3.65 which is significant on .01 level of significance. It means fathers who have married and not married their daughters are different on level of stress. So, the hypothesis which states that 'depression level of fathers who has not married their daughters will be higher than the fathers who have married their daughters'. is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that non-marriage of daughters produces stress on fathers.

Depression level of mothers who have married/not married their daughters.

After applying depression scale on mothers, procured data was analyzed and arranged in table 2

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Table 2 (N, M, SD and t-ratio of depression of mothers who have married/not married their daughters)

| Sample | Status of daughters | N | M | SD | t-ratio | P |
|--------|---------------------|----|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Mother | Married | 15 | 25.26 | 9.49 | 2.69 | .05* |
| | Not married | 15 | 36.60 | 10.44 | | |

Significant on .05 level.

Considering above table 2, it is observed that mothers of married and unmarried daughters are different on level of depression, because t value between these two types of mothers is 2.69 which is significant on .05 level of significance. It means mothers who have married their daughters and not married their daughters are different on the level depression. The hypothesis which states that the 'mothers who has not married their daughters will have more depression than mothers who has married their all daughters' is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. It means both types of mothers are different on the level of depression.

DISCUSSION

The result of this work indicates that fathers who have married their daughters and not married their daughters differ on the level of depression. It is well observed fact that marriage of girls in India is a complex affair irrespective caste, religion and region. Nearly in every religion, dowry is creeping slowly. As far as Muslim society is concerned giving and taking dowry is anti-Islamic. Barring some instances, they do not take dowry in cash. But they take dowry in kind. Dowry is nothing but a pecuniary transfer to attract better match (Becker, 1991, Rao, 1993a and Anderson, 2003). Exceptionally some people take dowry to meet the expenses of marriage. For example, vehicle, band parties, cracker, etc. Just like Hindu, they have adopted nearly all rituals like marriage song, rashm-e Haldi, etc. all these rituals have to be done at the time of marriage. This requires money. Despite they have to spend on pandal, marriage halls etc. In some marriages, food menus are also finalized which involve biryani, Kababs, salad, papad, sweets, ice creams, etc. The fathers of the bride have to bear all these expenses. Furthermore, the fathers of the bride have to purchase jewellery. This involves heavy economic expenses. Anticipation of these expenses of money produces depression among fathers.

It has been also observed that the mothers who have not married their daughters have higher level of depression. It is due to the fact that women are more sensitive to man regarding marriage of the daughters. Non-marriage of daughter is a big problem for mothers. They take it as stigma that her daughter is still unmarried. The idea of setting marriage in early or late is typically decided by the parents especially in rural area. Indian society is stratified by the caste system and there are almost no cross-caste marriage in rural area (Reddy and Rajanna, 1984; Driver, 1984; Bradford, 1985; Deolalikar and Rao; 1998). They are continuously under the shadow of depression that how to arrange the marriage of their daughters. Secondly, it is commonly observed that they can provide all faculties which are necessary for living separate life with husband. For example- washing machines, freeze, grinders, gas cylinder, stove etc. It is well observed fact that their daughters are not using these in their own home but they have desire to provide these things to daughters as dowry without considering the cost and their source of income. The anticipation of such huge expenses cause depression among.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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