

Original Article

Psychological impact of matrimonial rejection; A study on mental well-being of females

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Abstract

Background: Women deserves the essence of being made aware of the idea that they are much-needed, vital humans before respect and recognition and not perfunctory beings to be displayed like vegetables in a Market. The culture of imposing will and setting a threshold for a girl's 'marriageable age' is brutal. And so is the trend of making a girl exhibit herself before strangers who could throw any piece of unbound judgments about the physical and social appearance of the girl without having to offer any compunction. The aim of our study was to explore the psychological impact of matrimonial showcasing on the mental health of women.

Methodology: An observational study was conducted through a structured questionnaire that inquired the subject's demographic details and the psychological and emotional adverse impacts of matrimonial display was also monitored. Data was collected from 100 females from diverse age groups and occupational statuses. All unmarried females were included in the study while married were excluded. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS version 22. All quantitative variables were summarized as mean, standard deviation (SD) while frequency and percentages were given for qualitative variables.

Results: Results suggested that a high ratio of females think that these matrimonial services are used as a business and felt disrespectful because of such rejections which were made on the basis of complexion, height, weight, cast, and financial instability.

Conclusion: Our results indicate two major aspects related to mental health of these girls, one is direct impact of this every other day showcasing that is leading such girls to range of behavioral difficulties and second is the collective concern about the effect of these annoyances in the girl's social living that can be an essential factor of overall development of unconstructive societal impact.

Keywords

Matrimonial Rejection, Psychological aspects, feminine health, well-being, mental health.

Introduction

How far we have come? Where modernization has taken over the globe, it is still the Asian mentality that along with birth and death marriage is also one of the most important vital event the people's life. Moreover, it has become the bedrock of the "happily ever after" in our society (Mukherjee et al., 2017). It is high time that to understand that apart from birth and death only marriage is a matter of choice and forceful implementation must be considered as human rights violation (Mukherjee et al., 2017).

According to the Article 16 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), marriage is the process that must include both, the appropriate age and the individual's consent. It was reported back in 2009 that more than 50 million girls were forced to get married despite of being under-age and yet un-consensual marriages (Nour, 2009). However, the rates have declined over the years for both women and men but not much, i.e. getting married mostly after 30's is getting more trendy (Eric, 2008). Today delayed marriages and live in relationships are becoming more

trendy (Sangita, 2016) but the concept remains unrecognized and illegal according to the religious aspects of almost all Muslim countries.

Delayed marriages are potential triggers among the desi families leading to excessive matrimonial practices that in turn places adverse psychological impact on the mental health, primarily of the females (Rathor, 2011). Although this showcasing involves both the genders but females are far more effected by these practices as compared to males. On one hand women are reminded each day, for them to be only worthy of getting married. While on the other hand the people looking for a good looking, well mannered, employed, educated, not too thin, not too fat kind of women, brilliantly make one feel like a Mannequin, dressed up so well just to impress the costumers so that they instantly take it (Rathor, 2011). These patterns of matrimonial behaviors and marriage vary among different cultural backgrounds (Sathar, 1986).

Due to these societal, cultural and family pressures the females often remain depressed and anxious.

Suzanne Heintz, an artist by profession, during the efforts to fulfil family expectations and to fight against international anxiety and cultural criticism, decided to start a perfect Mannequin Family to break the norms (Suzanne H, 2014). This typical scenario in our society is not any lesser than a selection for the perfect doll which will be operated by the possessor only. These scenarios not only being the significant part of negative experiences in girls present life but also induce a cyclic behavioral implications that ranges from confidence shattering to social anxiety. In more severe and frequent cases of such incidents it leads to low self-esteem, depression or generalized anxiety etc.

Well, it was getting late. Seriously late for a woman my age not to have a ring on her finger. People said, "You're such a nice girl, why aren't you married?" No one actually used that out of date word, but, what they were driving at was that I was a "Spinster," and I got tired of hearing about it.

[Suzanne Heintz]

Despite of the modernization and societal development, the cultural background is neither letting the females to liberate and nor allowing them to practice their own choices. These cultural boundaries would not allow women to become independent and live their lives on their own terms. Instead, the negativity here starts up with pondering over the flaws in every women and then commercializing it through such matrimonial practices. These consistent events of rejection breaks her self-confidence and leads her to

despair. The aim of this study is to highlight the impacts of cultural imprisonment and to portray this real picture of matrimonial practices and their mental health impacts.

Methodology

This observational study was conducted on a sample of 100 females. The study subjects included only unmarried females of different age groups and diverse occupations. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire inquiring the demographics and the impacts associated with their matrimonial rejections and showcasing. Subjects were asked to rate each item indicating their level of agreement. Likert Scale was used for rating i.e. Never=1, rarely=2, Often=3, Very Often =4, Always =5. The items included the feelings associated with matrimonial rejections. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS version 22. All quantitative variables were summarized as mean, standard deviation (SD) while frequency and percentages were given for qualitative variables.

Results

A total of 100 females with a mean age of 24.67 ± 4.57 were included in the study. According to the results in table 1 around 90% females were below 30 years of age with majority in their early and mid-20's while only 9% were above 30 years. Educational and occupational status of these females was also inquired. And the results showed that 49.5% females were post-graduates. The study sample included 57% employed females, 12.1% unemployed and 30% students became part of the study.

Table 1: Demographic details of study participants

Variables	Mean \pm SD/n(%) (n=100)
Age	24.67 \pm 4.57
below 30 years	90 (90.9)
above 30-years	9(9.1)
Educational Status	
Graduate	23(23.2)
Undergraduate	25(25.3)
Post-Graduate	49(49.5)
Higher-Secondary	2(2.0)
Occupation	
Employed	57(57.6)
Unemployed	12(12.1)
Students	30(30.3)

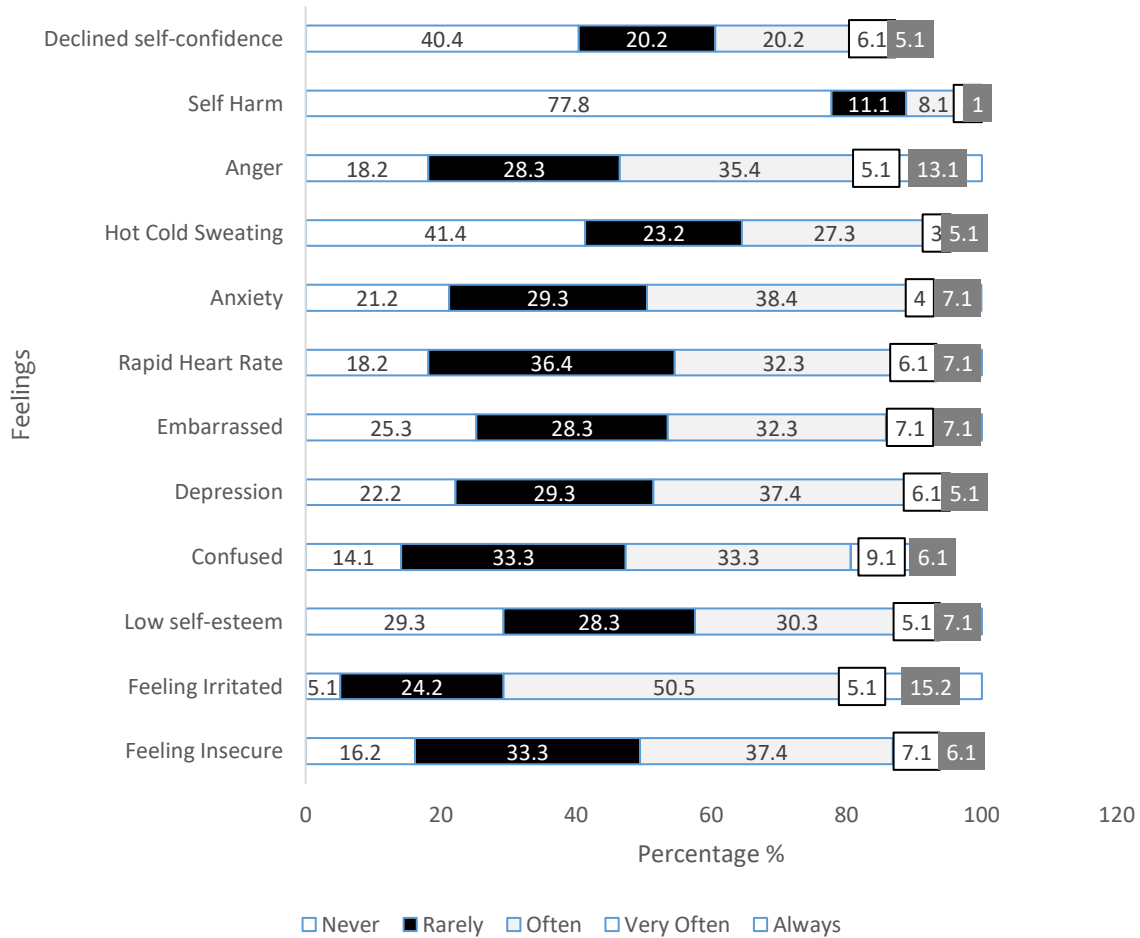


Figure 1: Feelings associated with matrimonial showcasing

Numerous adverse impacts were observed due to matrimonial practices and resulting rejections. Different reactions were reported by the subjects i.e. 20.2% females reported declined self-confidence, while 37.4% reported feeling of insecurity. 30.3% females said that they had low self-esteem due to these events and 32.3 % felt embarrassed.

Table 2 shows that 78.8% females reported that they do not think People judging them are not educated enough to do so. Huge proportion i.e. 97% females said that these practices are disrespectful and must be stopped.

Table 2: Perceptions of respondents regarding the facts associated with Matrimonial display

Inquired Questions	Yes	No
People judging you, are educated enough?	21.2%	78.8%
Matrimonial service is a business	75.8%	24.2%
Matrimonial practices are disrespectful and must stop	97.0%	3.0%

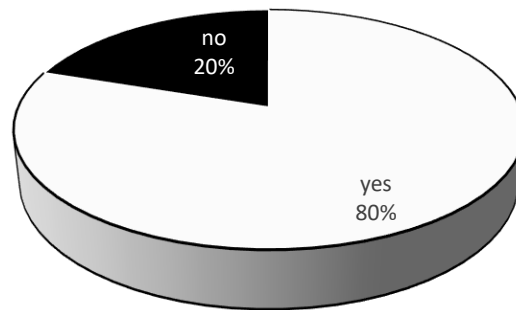


Figure 2: Presents the ratio of respondents forced by their families for matrimonial display

80% females reported that they were being forcefully presented before strangers while only 20% reported against the fact.

Discussion

Today Pakistani women has become independent enough to get educated and enlighten themselves with all the perks that were ones made available only for men. The literacy rate in Pakistan for female gender was reported to be 42.73 % in 2015, according to the World Bank Statistics (Trade economics 2015). Although the ratio has increased a bit since 2015 but it is still less than the male's literacy rate (69%) in our country. Females are rapidly moving towards advancement and crave for development and equality. Most of our study population belonged to educational sectors where majority of the females were graduates and post-graduates (Table 1), they strive for knowledge and freedom.

Despite of the efforts to reach out and spread awareness among the nation, it is still an indication of failure that majority of the females in our society are being forced to get married (Nour, 2009). And for that the matrimonial showcasing begins and continues until the family finds one to be settled down for. Majority of our study subjects reported being forcefully presented before strangers against their will (Figure 2).

Opposing these matrimonial practices do not indicate that women are against the marriage and family life. However, it is accepted globally that marriage and the right to choose an appropriate life partner are vital practices but it never promoted ignorance and violation of women rights (UDHR, 1948). It was quite clear from the study findings that majority of the females get affected through such matrimonial practices and face various psychological outcomes including low self-esteem, decreased self-confidence, self-harm, depression, anxiety and embarrassment was most common (Figure 1).

According to a study conducted in 2011 on Indian population matrimonial services and sites are prevailing on the Internet and becoming the most popular business globally and especially in Asia (Pal, 2011). According to our results females agreed to the fact that these matrimonial services are rapidly emerging business in our society and such hilarious activities must be stopped globally (Table 2) as it is very disgraceful to display a women in front of people like an eating item on the menu card or vegetables in market.

It is evident that females have been fighting for their existence in all sectors. But to put an end to this critical cultural tradition cannot be done instantly. Women role has been changing across the world and the rising acceptability gives a hope of better feminal future. And for that our prime need is to stand against all these cultural barriers that violate women's rights. It's time to understand that women being the major part of Pakistani population cannot be confined to kitchens. They can no longer be kept trapped in house corners. And if such practices do not stop it might make females psychologically ill and the victims with lost identities.

The study explored all hitches that were explored previously among Pakistani population but never talked about. Our aim was to give a clear idea that what these matrimonial practices are doing to the mental health of females and how these judgments manipulate their feelings and thoughts. This study had several limitations, small sample size and limited to Karachi only. We were unable to evaluate the level stress that these victims were going through.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the rising matrimonial business must be kept in balance by the Government and human rights organizations. Such services must be banned on the legal grounds. Moreover, appropriate training and awareness programs are quite necessary for our society as this seed cannot be instantly sown and grown into fruit. Two major factors are highlighted through our study, one is the showcasing of these females leading to adverse behavioral and psychological outcomes. These annoyances in the female's life are destructive and hinders with the advanced approach of the modern world with freedom for all.

Conflicts of interest

None.

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