

UNVEILING THE INTRIGUING IMPACT OF DOWRY ON FEMALE MARRIAGE: EVIDENCE FROM LOWER DIR, KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the practice and implications of dowry and its impacts on female marriage in contemporary society, with a specific focus on Dir Lower in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. This investigation seeks to identify the prevalence and variations in dowry customs, analyze the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing dowry transactions in female marriages. Dowry is a common tradition in Pakistan general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particular, the cash or gifts, other livelihood things received by the groom during marriage become social evil in our society where dowry quantity looks like to increase by reason of lifestyle changes drift of society. The study was conducted by using quantitative methods and procedures. 327 potential respondents are receipts through simple random probability technique. The primary data composed based on Likert scale (on a three levels) for interview schedule and then analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software to measure the relationship between independents and dependents variables with the help of chi-square test. The study results conclude that dowry system has rooted to every society because all familial organization encourages the rehearsal of give and taking rich dowry. In contemporary society the evils of dowry are valuable source for prestige and honor for bride. Women with rich dowry got considerable respect by in their in-law while women with little dowry are habitually insulted, tortured, and for some situation unfluctuating from homes. It is experience that the amount of dowry decides the bride proposal and many cares perpetuate delay marriage for girls. In each year price of dowries increase with inverse proportion girl's marriage and parents postponed daughter's marriage due the evil of dowry. It is just a trend and people follow it as a symbol of respect for parents and women as well. The study recommended taking the issue of dowry seriously due to its immorality, especially for poor families. It proposed that community leaders and elders create rules to combat dowry. Additionally, the media should run campaigns and anti-dowry programs to discourage this unjust social practice.

Keywords: Dowry, Bride, Marriage, Livelihood, and Contemporary

INTRODUCTION

Dir lower is one the rich district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa knows for their unique socio culture structure, the history of Dir lower is every interesting and thought since 1400 century because from that time Dir was under control of princely state till 1969

(Waheed, 2009). Geographically, it situated in the north west side of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa surrounding by District Sawat, Bajaur, Balakand and Afghanistan state (Ali et al., 2017). This study is conducted in Dir Lower to measure the unveiling the intriguing far-

reaching impact of dowry on female marriage. Illustration of large amount of primary data and literature discourse on this hidden phenomenon existed but accurate scientific investigation is worse. Unveiling in the available evidence and emerging trend of dowry it is become social problem general and social evil particular, because right now dowry is favorable practice is every family (Abdullah et al., 2023) Ironically, dowry become a custom of contemporary society because each family not alienated their female from dowry (Jan et al., 2021). Due this recognize and well adjust practice most of female are out of marriage because high amount of poverty, employment, and underemployments in study areas could lead the phenomena of under marriage (Khan et al., 2023) Departments Local Government, Election and Rural Development estimate that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa there are average 39,062 marriages is done with average amount of 78,125,000 dowry cost due emerging popularity of this practice increase 10 % in the last years while the situation of this evil are more alarming in the study areas where average marriage 3,121 was done in 2020 with 156,050,000 average amount of dowry but emerging trend it become 16% increase last year (Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development Department, 2023). Keeping view of the above statistics it stated here that dowry become a social evil with in Pashtun society that directly and indirectly effect the ratio of marriage. Its contested that in the study area there no research based studies available to address the issue of unveiling the intriguing and far-reaching impact of dowry on female marriage. Further, in general discourse and orally discussion of all people contest the issue based on their own perception and viewpoint. From religious point of view, religious scholar also discusses this issue in all congregational addresses. Newspaper and magazines also give subsidies to issue from different angle, but unfortunately, systematically and research based study was not found in the existing literature to address the issue of unveiling the intriguing and far-reaching impact of dowry on female marriage in the context of Dir Lower Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. To fill this gap in the existing literature this study explores and examine the unveiling the intriguing and far-reaching impact of dowry and demonstrate for inaugurated recommendation for policy makers

general and concern department particular, and promote research based awareness for general people regarding this serious issue.

Study's Justification/Statements

The investigation into the impact of dowry on female marriage in Lower Dir is of significant importance, as this phenomenon has largely remained unexplored within the local research community. While several studies have been conducted, such as those by Ali et al., (2017) and (2018), Ibrar & Naqvi, (2017), Makino, (2014), Naz, (2012), and Akhter et al., (2023), none have comprehensively addressed the intricate association between dowry and marriage. This investigation endeavors to fill this research gap by conducting rigorous research and data analysis to illuminate the complex dynamics surrounding dowry practices and their impact on women's marital experiences. By providing empirical evidence, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of how dowry influences marriage outcomes in this specific cultural context, offering insights that could inform policy decisions and social interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and the well-being of women in the region.

Objective of the Study

The research objective is to empirically investigate the relationship between dowry practices and female marriages in the Lower Dir region. This investigation seeks to identify the prevalence and variations in dowry customs, analyze the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing dowry transactions in female marriages, assess the impact of dowry on various marital outcomes, including women's well-being, marital stability, and empowerment. Additionally, it aims to explore the perspectives and experiences of individuals involved in dowry transactions, such as brides, grooms, families, and community members. Ultimately, the study endeavors to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy recommendations and interventions designed to address the implications of dowry practices on gender equality and the welfare of women in Lower Dir.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dowry in social practice where money, property, ornaments, and other form of affluence which man

receive from his spouse or her household during the time of marriage (Shah, et al., 2016). In today society dowry develop well established organization structure among the affluent class, historically, it was practice in ancient Rome and Greece, medieval Europe, India, and modern mainland countries (Ullah et al., 2020). Dowry is one of nastiest social organization which proclaim discrimination for women by virtue of their life and increase subsequent arises for the pervasive greed with marital relationship (Ch et al., 2023). It is predominant exist both rural and urban areas of Pakistan and among affluent and non-affluent family and round fifty out of a hundred ferocity against female is happening due to dowry system (Makino, 2019). The practice and unusual organizational structure of dowry is an act of discrimination against unmarried women whose worth and value are demarcated based on the amount of her corresponding dowry, a solid illustration of selfishness and greed eventually dismiss the real meaning of marital life, particularly for the women belonging to the middle and lower classes (Abdullah et al., 2023). The monopoly of dowry actually, legal and not reflected wrong but if people give priorities to conjugal life rather rate of dowry is being paid to groom with promise, risk of coercion, that why family get unhappy and feel irritating at the birth of girl baby (Ali et al., 2013). In dowry system, women are preserved as a profitable product and this insensitive preparation makes the social structure as in a kind of intolerable condition (Bhamani et al., 2023). In Pashtun society tradition and convention where individuals are enforced to live his or her life under orthodox rituals and customs of their descendants and not question any kind of personal choice including dowry (Makino, 2021). Providing dowry in matrimonies is considered legal but all most lower and middle classes individuals are exactly the ones who are extremely persecuted by the dowry system and this ill-suited practice spread alike pandemic in our sounding and become foundation of massive anguish for the poor class of Pashtun society (Sharma, & Gupta, 2022). In Pashtun society, dowry associated deaths casualty are often reported, evidently, accelerated to the burning of women in kitchen and become accidental deaths later on (Khan et al., 2023). As far religion of Islam is concerned, the rich dowry organizational structure has no religious and tradition support where Islamic system

is completely counter to social vanities and extravagance (Ahmed, 2018). Sometime, dowry also assisted women in the form of protection in contradiction of ill treatment by her partner and his respective family, providing an inducement for the man not to maltreatment his wife due high dowry of bride (Khan et al., 2023), In present times particularly in Pakistan, only those women possess high esteemed who carry large amount of luxurious dowry to the groom's family and fulfil all their demands, this make a huge amount of decrease in marriage ratio (Ali et al., 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research's scientific validity hinges on its chosen research methodology, encompassing various elements such as the study's inherent characteristics, methods for selecting participants, tools used for data collection, and the techniques applied for data analysis. In this study, the following methodology will be adopted to ensure the research is conducted with rigor and credibility

Theoretical Framework

This study is well suited to social exchange theory, develop in the mid-20th period as a social reaction to economic doctrines. Established by academics like George Homans and Peter Blau, the model postulates that people take part in social-interactions out of balanced calculation of lost and benefits. It emphasizes on the idea that social relations are similar to dealings, where individual aim to minimizing costs while maximize rewards (Subhani, & Afza, 2009). Over time, the model has grown and been pragmatic to numerous facets of socio-cultural life, as well as dowry implication complications. This philosophical model stated that the dowry's transactional in their nature, depicting marriage as an exchange of incomes among families. In addition, dowry objects, which include gifts, money, and property, characterize the material aspects of this exchange. This model highlights how particular exchanges influence power inequities, affect social relationship, and change long term consequences within the marital context. The implication theoretical model to dowry system, academics easily understanding deeper relationship between financial contacts, socio-cultural norms, and the impact on individuals retrospective and prospective lives.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study provides a structured overview of the key concepts, variables, and relationships to be explored. In this framework, the central concept is "Dowry" and its impact on "Female Marriage." The study considers several influencing factors, such as cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and gender dynamics, which are likely to affect the relationship between dowry and female marriage outcomes. These factors can lead to various possible scenarios, ranging from positive impacts on women's well-being and empowerment to negative consequences, including financial burdens and marital instability. The framework also acknowledges the role of community and institutional influences in shaping dowry practices and their effects on female marriages in the Lower Dir region. By examining these elements, the study aims to uncover the intricate dynamics surrounding dowry and its impact on female marriages, contributing to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Nature of the Study

From a methodological perspective, the researchers employed quantitative research techniques with the objective of obtaining a precise and comprehensive understanding of the impact of dowry on female marriages. Quantitative research involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, which allows for a structured examination of relationships, patterns, and trends. (Newman, & Benz, 1998). In this study, the use of quantitative techniques enables the researchers to quantify the various dimensions of dowry, such as its prevalence, the amount involved, and its effects on women's marital experiences. By adopting a quantitative research methodology, the study aims to provide empirical evidence that contributes to a more accurate and data-driven portrayal of how dowry impacts female marriages in the context of Lower Dir.

Potential Respondents

The potential respondents for this study cover a diverse spectrum, with a notable inclusion being household heads (women excluded due to sociocultural constraints related to data collection). Household heads are of particular significance as

they are often intimately involved in dowry practices, transactions, and negotiations. By including this category of respondents, the research strives to offer a comprehensive understanding of how dowry affects female marriages in Lower Dir, thus incorporating a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

Sampling Size Determination

Lower Dir, a district situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, is administratively subdivided into multiple tehsils, each exhibiting its unique characteristics. Some of the noteworthy tehsils within Lower Dir encompass Khall, Samarbagh, Munda, Blambat, Timergara, Adenzai, and Lal Qila. These tehsils play a crucial role in the district's administrative framework, addressing the diverse requirements of the local communities (Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development Department, 2023).

In light of this, the study includes household heads as potential respondents, considering that the Pakistan census report of 2023 indicates the presence of 3,121 nine-member households within the district (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Therefore, the study employs a simple random sampling method and selects a total of 327 respondents, exclusively male household heads, from the pool of 3,121 households using the Sekaran sample selection criteria.

Data Collection Tool

Data collection for this study involved the use of carefully designed structured interview schedules, with the inclusion of a Likert three-order scale: "yes," "no," and "don't know." This scale is a common tool in social research for gauging attitudes and opinions. "Yes" indicated agreement, "no" signified disagreement, and "don't know" allowed respondents to express uncertainty or lack of knowledge (Edmondson, 2005). The Likert scale was integrated into interview schedules to capture a wide range of responses, enabling a nuanced analysis of the data and offering insights into the perspectives and attitudes of respondents regarding the impact of dowry on female marriages in Lower Dir.

Data Analysis Method

The study employed a robust data analysis approach, integrating both descriptive and inferential statistics to gain a thorough understanding of the connection between dowry and its influence on marriage. The numerical data, derived from Likert-scale responses, underwent comprehensive analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage calculations, were used to effectively summarize the data. Frequency distributions revealed the frequency of specific responses, like "yes," "no," or "don't know," providing valuable insights into prevailing attitudes among respondents. Percentage calculations facilitated the clear representation of response distributions within the sample.

Additionally, inferential statistics, notably the Chi-square test, were applied to investigate the relationship between dowry practices and marriage outcomes. This statistical test evaluated whether a significant association existed between dowry practices and their impact on marriages. By comparing observed and expected response frequencies within the Likert scale categories, the Chi-square test gauged the significance of any relationships, shedding light on the substantial impact of dowry practices on female marriages in Lower Dir. This combined use of descriptive and inferential statistics enhanced the research's analytical depth, facilitating a more comprehensive assessment of its objectives.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Frequency and Percentage on Impact of Dowry on Female marriage

Table no. 01 conclude evidence about frequency and percentage distribution regarding impact of Dowry on female marriage in the locale of study. The table contains 8 indicators regard impact of Dowry on female marriage. In first indicator, 201 (61.5 %) potential respondents discernable agree option regarding the statement that dowry system in the study areas distresses a woman's married status, 91 (27.8 %) potencies respondents noticeable disagree while the rest of respondents 35 (10.7 %) chosen don't know. In the second indicator, 145 (44.3 %) respondents argue that experience of respondents about demands of dowry affect marital decisions, 136 (41.6 %) respondents disagree where 46 (14.1 %) potential respondents picked for don't know.

Dowry system became impediments for financial loads for the wife's family side is a third indicator for this study, whereby 150 (45.9 %) study respondents answered with agree, 142 (43.4 %) study respondents reacted for disagree while the reaming 35 (10.7 %) respondents retorted don't know. Furthermore, 28 (8.6 %) study respondents notified agree that burden of dowry constantly triggered stress during conjugal proposal process, 249 (76.1 %) potential respondents chose disagree they while 50 (15.3 %) respondents replied don't know. Dowry related conflicts lead to conjugal disharmony and 101 (30.9 %) respondents accept with agree the said statements where 173 (52.9 %) study respondents disagree and reaming 53 (16.2 %) respondents discernable don't know. the burden of dowry constantly produced pressure within a bride family and dismiss upcoming marriage, in this milieu, 246 (75.2 %) study respondents argue with agree while 63 (19.3 %) potential respondents reacted with disagree and reaming 30 (9.2 %) respondents said that they don't know about the said concept. In addition, 113 (34.6 %) respondents selected agree against the statement an occasions somewhere that dowry demands lead to in dismiss all the marriage discussion between both party 63 (19.3 %) respondents marked disagree and reaming 151 (46.2 %) noticeable don't know about the said concept. In last, 64 (19.6 %) respondents counted with agree that dowry play key role in decline of marriage that could support the concept of late marriage, where 194 (59.3 %) respondents replied with disagree and reaming 69 (21.1 %) respondents countered don't know about the said concept.

Table 01
Frequency and Percentage on Impact of Dowry on Female Marriage.

S. No	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Mean
1	Dowry system in the study areas distresses a woman's married status	201(61.5 %)	91 (27.8 %)	35 (10.7 %)	1.49
2	State on experiences about demands of dowry affect marital decisions	145 (44.3 %)	136 (41.6 %)	46 (14.1 %)	1.70
3	Dowry system became impediments for financial loads for the wife's family side	150 (45.9 %)	142 (43.4 %)	35 (10.7 %)	1.65
4	Burden of dowry constantly triggered stress during conjugal proposal process	28 (8.6 %)	249 (76.1 %)	50 (15.3 %)	2.07

5	Dowry related conflicts lead to conjugal disharmony	101 (30.9 %)	173 (52.9 %)	53 (16.2 %)	1.85
6	The burden of dowry constantly produced pressure within a bride family and dismiss	246 (75.2 %)	51 (15.6 %)	30 (9.2 %)	2.66
7	An events where dowry demands lead to in dismiss all the marriage discussion between both party	113 (34.6 %)	63 (19.3 %)	151 (46.2 %)	2.12
8	Dowry play key role in decline of marriage that could support the concept of late marriage	64 (19.6 %)	194 (59.3 %)	69 (21.1 %)	2.02

Frequencies are represented by number in table and percentage proportions are represented by number in Parenthesis.

A Relationship Between Dowry Demands and Its Impact on Female Marriage

To assessment the relationship between dowry demands and its impact on female marriage, variable was offered into few statements, as given in table-2. Findings of the table are discussed below.

To find out the said relation the Chi-square test was applied and here study found a significant connotation between dowry system in the study areas distresses a woman's married status with value of ($P=0.004$). The same association was also observed by Cheema, & Coxhead, (2022) in the following words as; dowry system has given rise to many socio-economic problems with very serious consequences. Numerous incidents of bride burning, harassment and physical torture Similarly, a high significant link ($P=0.000$) was established between experience about demands of dowry affect marital decisions. The similar observation was also explored by Kamal, (2023) with the remarks that in Pakistan, it is really difficult for poor parents to arrange a dowry for their daughters. Dowry increased the expenditures of the parents on the marriage of their daughters.as dowry has been its roots in Pashtun society since long because family setup itself encourages the practice of rich dowry due to its foundations in the customary laws. In the same way, a highly significant association ($P=0.000$) was found between dowry system became impediments for financial loads for the wife's family side. The same association is also noted Khan et al., (2020) with the remarks that dowry prohibition act is ineffective or people don't care

about this law because it is not implemented effectively. Even may be people don't know about the dowry act which is enacted to prevent the giving or taking of dowry. You may have to go to jail or fill a big fine for it. Correspondingly, a significant relation ($P=0.001$) was confirmed between burden of dowry constantly triggered stress during conjugal proposal process. The same association is also noted by Habiba, & Kamal, (2022) with the remarks that only those women are highly respected who bring a lot of expensive dowry to the groom's family and fulfill all their demands. Consistently, in a same way significant relation ($P=0.002$) was confirmed between dowry related conflicts lead to conjugal disharmony. In addition, a highly significant relation ($P=0.000$) was confirmed between dowry related conflicts lead to conjugal disharmony. The same observation was made by Yasmeen et al., (2021) with the remarks that the payment of a high dowry may influence decision about whether to delay marriage for girls. Moreover, in some ways there are significant relation ($P=0.005$) was confirmed between a occasions somewhere that dowry demands lead to in dismiss all the marriage discussion between both part. Evidence was found in the study Kausar, (2021) with the remarks that in several cases, husband family requests dowry in form of currency, motorcycle, jewels, etc. and when their requests are not fulfilled the females are psychologically, physically tortured. In last, this study noticed that there is significant relation ($P=0.004$) was confirmed between occasions where dowry demands lead to in dismiss all the marriage discussion between both part. The same observation has been observed by Ahmad et al., (2016) with the remarks that the dowry system ought to be prohibited in Pakistan, much the same as the serving of more than one dish at a marriage function. Restricting this convention prompts a more joyful life since it is a major wellspring of worry among parents of young girls.

Table 4.46.
A Relationship Between Dowry Demands and Its Impact on Female Marriage

S. No.	Statement	Response	Are dowry is accepted by your family?			Total	Statistics
			Agree	Disagree	Don't know		
1.	Dowry system in the study areas distresses a woman's married status	Agree	70	40	12	22	$X^2=15.487$ $P = (0.004)$
		Disagree	64	21	10	95	
		Don't know	67	30	13	112	
		Total	201	91	35	327	
2.	State on experiences about demands of dowry affect marital decisions	Agree	48	50	20	118	$X^2=23.473$ $P = (0.000)$
		Disagree	50	40	10	100	
		Don't know	47	46	16	100	
		Total	145	136	46	327	
3.	Dowry system became impediments for financial loads for the wife's family side	Agree	55	47	6	108	$X^2=21.969$ $P = (0.000)$
		Disagree	35	50	9	94	
		Don't know	50	45	20	115	
		Total	150	142	35	327	
4.	Burden of dowry constantly triggered stress during conjugal proposal process	Agree	16	80	15	111	$X^2=17.627$ $P = (0.001)$
		Disagree	9	86	23	118	
		Don't know	3	83	12	98	
		Total	28	249	50	327	
5.	Dowry related conflicts lead to conjugal disharmony	Agree	33	57	19	109	$X^2=16.811$ $P = (0.002)$
		Disagree	29	60	25	114	
		Don't know	39	56	10	46	
		Total	101	173	53	327	
6.	The burden of dowry constantly produced pressure within a bride family and dismiss upcoming marriage	Agree	86	15	5	106	$X^2=21.970$ $P = (0.000)$
		Disagree	78	17	14	109	
		Don't know	82	14	11	107	
		Total	246	51	30	327	
7.	An events where dowry demands lead to in dismiss all the marriage discussion between both party	Agree	41	25	50	116	$X^2=15.097$ $P = (0.005)$
		Disagree	49	23	52	124	
		Don't know	13	15	49	77	
		Total	113	63	151	327	
8.	Dowry play key role in decline of marriage that could support the concept of late marriage	Agree	20	80	31	131	$X^2=15.393$ $P = (0.004)$
		Disagree	23	83	29	135	
		Don't know	21	30	9	60	
		Total	64	193	69	327	

CONCLUSION

This research delves into the practice and implications of dowry in contemporary society, with a specific focus on Dir Lower in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Dowry, in this context, refers to the

gifts or cash that a groom receives from the bride's family during a marriage. The findings of this study shed light on the profound and, at times, unexpected impact of dowry on female marriages. It is evident from both primary and secondary sources that dowry is a deeply ingrained social practice within the institution of marriage. Many families continue to uphold and adhere to the tradition of providing substantial dowries, often intertwined with local customary laws and societal norms. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the study area, Pashtun Society, where cultural values and norms play a significant role, favoring and perpetuating dowry practices. Moreover, the study underscores the prevalence of discrimination against women with meager dowries, who often face humiliation, mistreatment, and, in some cases, even expulsion from their marital homes. This has a significant impact on the overall rate of female marriages in the region. In light of social exchange theory, which posits that individuals engage in social interactions based on a calculated assessment of costs and benefits, the practice of dowry can be viewed as a transaction within the context of marriage, where the aim is to minimize costs and maximize rewards. The reification concept, as proposed by George Locus, emphasizes that people create customs through repeated practices, which subsequently influence and constrain their social lives, as is evident in the perpetuation of the dowry system. The study contributes valuable insights into the societal and cultural dimensions of dowry and its repercussions on female marriages, providing a comprehensive analysis of this complex phenomenon within the context of Dir Lower.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All people should have needed to undertake the evil very seriously that how the practice of paying dowry is immoral for poor families. Governmental and Non-governmental organization take interest in this serious issue. Local community leader and elders sensibly decide to make some rules within community for dowry. Right of marriage is not alienated by any person but evil of dowry is avaricious this basic human right. Consequently, young people should have needed to avoided this practice.

The result of this research generalized over all the district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa both urban and rural areas to bring this evil in academia.

Modern media should needed make public propaganda in contradiction of dowry system and arranged anti dowry programs to convince people regarding this unfair social evil

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