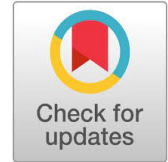
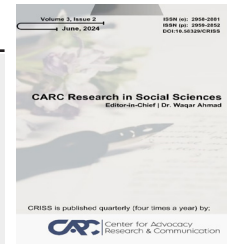




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Widows' Remarriage Problems: A Case Study of District Malakand Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The present study, titled "Widows' Remarriage Problems: A Case Study of District Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," was carried out to evaluate various remarriage problems faced by widows on the basis of their gender, specifically focusing on Pakhtun socio-cultural norms and values. The goal of this research is to look into the problems that widows face when they remarry. The study was conducted using a quantitative approach, and data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. With the use of purposive sampling and Yamane's formula, 386 widows of all ages made up the sample size. In uni-variate analysis, data were analysed using frequencies and percentages, and a chi-square test was applied for the association of independent and dependent variables under the bi-variate analysis. The study findings disclose that widows in Pakhtun society were facing numerous problems, in which problems with remarriage are extremely common. Despite the fact that widows in Islam are allowed to get married again after their iddat period, which is four months and ten days if the widow is not conceived, or until the widow gives birth if she is conceived, but still, widows face certain socio-cultural obstacles to remarriage in Pakhtun society. Results found different factors significantly associated with widows' problems like, widows were abstained from remarriage because society does not accept widows' remarriage, widows do not want to remarry because they think that their children will suffer due to negligence in the second marriage, widows abstained from remarriage due to their grownup children, they do not remarry because in Pakhtun society majority of widows devote their lives for children, widows have not remarried because their children did not give proper consents, the saying that it is inauspicious for a young man to remarry a widow is/was an obstacle to widows' remarriage and widows have not remarried because of love, loyalty and respect for late husband.

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INTRODUCTION

A woman is usually seen as less than her husband under the institution of marriage, where the husband and wife should always be treated equally. The issue is worse in developing countries like Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, because of the region's distinct social, cultural, and economic environment, which occasionally disregards the fundamental human rights of this weaker

segment of society. Pakhtun society is characterised by its patriarchal nature and rigidity. Women are restricted to domestic duties and are unable to engage in any productive activities outside of their homes due to gender discrimination and oppression. It is often believed that women are the victims of male-dominated Pakhtun society on a regular basis. A widow's increased vulnerability makes her more open to many forms of exploitation. A widow is a married woman whose husband has passed away and who has not remarried; in other words, a widow is a married woman whose husband's death has permanently deprived her of their marriage.

A spouse represents not only the death of a life partner, rescuer, protector, guardian, and source of income, but also discriminating financial enslavement, brutal and dehumanizing widowhood customs, and prejudiced social marginalization (Imam, 1988). There are far more widows than widowers, and widows account for a larger proportion

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of the female population than widowers do of the male population. In addition, widows are less likely than widowers to marry in contemporary Western societies, preferring unofficial relationships over marriage, which is frequently accompanied by housekeeping errands (Karlsson, Sofie, & Klas, 2002). Moreover, according to Hossain's research study (n. d.), widows are not allowed to get married again because they are viewed as unlucky. Therefore, no guy will marry them. Access to remarriage was shaped by cultural norms; however, widows were more flexible in choosing a mate than widowers.

Furthermore, Manfredini (2006) claimed that socioeconomic factors made remarriages more likely to be consanguineous than initial unions. According to research by Leonard (2009), widow remarriage is still frowned upon in society today. Despite the regulations, there are significant societal traditions that dictate a widow must pass away as a widow, regardless of her age or circumstances. In India, becoming a widow involves more than just changing one's marital status or facing social and financial stigma. Widowhood also entails dealing with a number of psychological effects, such as loneliness and, frequently, deprivation that causes mental disorders. The journals listed the obstacles to widow remarriage in order to inform the public about them. The orthodox people's mindset posed the biggest challenge. They did not allow others to be similarly prepared, nor were they ready for the change.

Despite the fact that a remarriage law was passed in 1856, the orthodox people consistently made the decision to break the law. Additionally, the administration was not giving effective law enforcement any thought. Widespread illiteracy was another issue that Indian women faced. Even when shrewd men stepped up to marry widows, the majority of widows were not prepared to get married again because of their lack of education and fear of societal shame. The main challenge was to consider basic social issues as religious laws. The entire marriage system had been spiritualized by the orthodox, making it impossible for people to escape the grip of religion when it came to marital matters. Positive social transformation was further impeded by the deeply ingrained caste system. Altogether, the above empirical work and facts, this study was designed to look into the problems that widows face when they remarry

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prem (1994) noted that there is a notable distinction between Muslim and Hindu communities with respect to widows' remarriage customs. Although the Quran promotes remarriage following a husband's passing, widows' ability to do so is nonetheless restricted. Widow remarriage is also not accepted in Bangladeshi society; although it happens frequently, it is not always simple. There is a lot of polygamy in Bangladesh. It is discriminatory for a man to marry the widow of another person or the wife of his deceased brother. According to Jamila (1980), even though a widow is far lower in status than her spouse, she usually has very little control over who she marries. She will most likely find a spouse with children from a previous marriage. The

primary concern is the widow's dependent children, who also happen to be her mothers. Men are rarely inclined to take on the duties of a married widow with kids. Children may also cause issues for the new family while adjusting to other people, especially if there are other children from the second husband's prior marriage.

However, Hindu widows do not remarry because it is still frowned upon, especially in rural communities where religious customs and beliefs are upheld and perpetuated. Widows are considered to be of higher status than single girls because they are able to arrange their own marriage without the assistance of a guardian. The Quran makes no mention of unmarried girls being free to arrange their own marriage, but it does recognise their right to freedom of choice and consent in Nikah (for Muslims, the marriage contract between the bride and husband is a holy social compact), even though that consent is considered contingent upon the guardian's permission. The Quran grants widows the authority to arrange their own marriage and asks their guardians to grant them favors. The Quran says (translation):

Surah Al-Baqarah 234

And those among you who are taken to death and leave wives behind will have to wait four months and ten days. Once they have completed their Iddat (the time frame that a widow has to adhere to following her spouse's passing, during which she is not permitted to wed another man), you will not be held accountable for what they do with themselves in a respectable way because Allah is fully aware of all that you do.

"What they do with themselves" usually refers to Nikkah, but it can also refer to getting ready and beautifying themselves for a second marriage. In any case, a widow is free to make her own decisions, and the phrase "acceptable manner" indicates that her choice should be respected by society in accordance with customs. The Quran describes Nikah as using the word "acceptable manner" or "custom," so it is obvious that Nikah is a "custom." Those who disagree with this are against the Quran. In actuality, the dislike of Nikkah among widows entered our culture due to the influence of Hindu society, whereas in Islamic society it has been considered a custom. Muslim men are instructed to marry widows in Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 240 describe how the widows have been set free for their own Nikah, while verse 235 of the same Surah encourages males to wed widows. Nikkah with a widow is a social necessity as well as a Sunnah. It is a societal necessity since, in comparison to an unmarried woman; it is more difficult and dangerous for a woman who has enjoyed the company and joys of marriage to live alone. A widow has a higher chance of corruption than an unmarried girl if she does not get married again.

For this reason, it is required in Islamic society to marry widows. Even widows are permitted to marry for themselves and select their own spouse. Even then, she is allowed to find a new companion and settle with him after her term (iddat) if her late husband has written a will stating that after his death, his wife will be given food, clothing, and shelter for a year, or seven months and twenty days more than the term (iddat) she will get for her social needs from his property. But in this instance, she is required, by her late

husband's will, to part with the food and clothes.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted in Malakand District, a district in Malakand Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. According to the 2017 District Census Report of Malakand, the total population of Malakand District is 717,806, and the number of widows is 11,031. In this research, widows were taken as the population of the study (KP Tehsil-wise Census Report, 2017). For this research, a sample size of 386 out of 11,031 was selected while using the Yamane sample size formula, purposive sampling techniques and interview schedule were used to obtain data from the respondents. The collected data was analyzed at univariate and bivariate level.

DATA ANALYSIS

Univariate Analysis

Table 1 briefly explains the problems faced by widows due to socio-cultural reasons. When the respondents were asked, the majority (75.6 percent) replied that they abstained from remarriage because society does not accept/uphold widows' remarriage, while 14.8 percent disagreed and 9.6 percent were found uncertain. Widows found it more difficult to remarry due to the double standards in this male-dominated patriarchal society. Even though a widower was encouraged to remarry as soon as possible, society ostracised a widow if she did the same. While widowers claim it was not a problem for them to find a willing marital spouse even when they had orphaned children, the widows lament that it is difficult to find willing male partners when the widow has orphans because of the added financial and social burden of providing for the new wife and her children (Butlerys et al. 1994).

Majority 87.3 percent of the respondents were of the view that they do not remarry because their children will suffer as it will result in their negligence in a second marriage. Similarly, 8.3 percent negated and 4.4 percent did not answer this statement. Widowed mothers may be more hesitant to remarry while their children are young

(Lampard & Peggs, 1999; Stewart, Manning, & Smock, 2003). Furthermore, 64.8 percent of widows abstained from remarriage as their children were grown up now, while 30.6 percent rejected this statement, and only 4.7 percent did not express their views. Results also showed that the majority (76.2 percent) of widows did not remarry; they had devoted their lives to children, while 20.2 percent disagreed and only 3.6 percent did not answer. More than half (60.9 percent) of the respondents were of the view that they did not remarry because their children did not give consent, while 33.2 percent rejected the statement and 6.0 percent did not share their opinion. About more than half (61.4 percent) of widows denied the statement that they did not remarry because they did not find a suitable partner. While only 29.3 percent agreed with the statement, 9.3 percent did not answer.

About 49.0 percent of the respondents disagreed with the saying that it is inauspicious for a young man to marry a widow, which is/was an obstacle to their marriage, while 29.8 percent accepted this statement, and 21.2 percent remained silent. About 47.9 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that an unemployed widow is not a suitable life partner for a male in our society; 46.1 percent disagreed, and 6.0 percent did not answer. The majority (51.8 percent) of respondents said that they did not remarry and could not afford a second marriage financially, while 41.2 percent disapproved the statement and 7.0 percent did not answer. The majority (77.2 percent) of respondents views were against the statement that fear of death of their next husband prevents them from remarriage, while 11.1 percent agreed and 11.7 percent remained uncertain. Similarly, when widows were asked that they didn't want to remarry because of love, loyalty, and respect for their late husbands, the majority (81.6 percent) accepted the statement, only 11.4 percent opposed, and 7.0 percent disagreed. The majority of 74.4 percent of widows disagreed with the statement that unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities for a second time prevents them from remarriage, while 21.5 percent agreed and only 4.1 percent remained neutral.

Table 1
Problems in Remarriage Due to Social Structure/Socio-Cultural Reasons

No	Statements	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Total
1.	You abstained from remarriage because society does not accept it.	292 (75.6%)	57 (14.8%)	37 (9.6%)	386 (100%)
2.	You do not want to remarry because you think that children will suffer, as it will result in their negligence in your second marriage.	337 (87.3%)	32 (8.3%)	17 (4.4%)	386 (100%)
3.	You abstained from remarriage as your children are now adults.	250 (64.8%)	118 (30.6%)	18 (4.7%)	386 (100%)
4.	You do not remarry because, in our society, the majority of widows devote their lives to children.	243 (63.0%)	114 (29.5%)	29 (7.5%)	386 (100%)
5.	You have not remarried because your children did not give consent.	235 (60.9%)	128 (33.2%)	23 (6.0%)	386 (100%)
6.	You did not remarry as you did not find a suitable partner.	113 (29.3%)	237 (61.4%)	36 (9.3%)	386 (100%)
7.	You do not remarry because you cannot financially afford a second marriage.	200 (51.8%)	159 (41.2%)	27 (7.0%)	386 (100%)
8.	Fear of the death of your next husband prevented you from remarrying.	43 (11.1%)	298 (77.2%)	45 (11.7%)	386 (100%)

9.	The saying that it is inauspicious for a young man to marry a widow is/was an obstacle to your remarriage.	115 (29.8%)	189 (49.0%)	82 (21.2%)	386 (100%)
10.	An unemployed widow is not a suitable partner for a male in our society.	185 (47.9%)	178 (46.1%)	23 (6.0%)	386 (100%)
11.	You have not remarried because of the love, loyalty, and respect you have for your late husband.	315 (81.6%)	44 (11.4%)	27 (7.0%)	386 (100%)
12.	Unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities for a second time (looking after in-law domestic chores) prevented you from remarriage.	83 (21.5%)	287 (74.4%)	16 (4.1%)	386 (100%)

Bivariate Analysis

Table 2 briefly discusses widows' remarriage problems due to socio-cultural factors. The findings of the below table reveal that widows' problems were significantly ($p = 0.005$) associated with widows abstained from remarriage because society does not accept/uphold widows remarriage. Many communities do not treat widows with much kindness. They must raise their children until they are mature enough to return the favour, and they are not permitted to be married again (Agarwal, 1998). A significant ($p = 0.009$) association was found between widows problems and the fear that their children will suffer in a second marriage. On the other hand, a non-significant ($p = 0.566$) association was found between widows abstaining from remarriage as their children are now adults and widows problems. Whereas a significant ($p = 0.053$) association was also found in widows problems and widows do not remarry because, in our society, the majority of widows devote their lives to children. Furthermore, a significant ($p = 0.052$) association

was also found between widows' problems and the lack of consent of widows' children for remarriage. Widows who do not remarry because they did not find a suitable partner were found to be non-significant ($p = 0.937$).

Widows are not willing to remarry because they cannot afford a second marriage financially; this was also found to be non-significantly ($p = 0.842$) associated with widow problems. Ogweno (2010) discovered that widows' low economic status and financial requirements contributed to the prevalence of widow remarriage. Furthermore, there was a non-significant ($p = 0.425$) association between widows problems and fear of the death of their next husband, which prevented widows from remarriage. Widows love, loyalty, and respect for their late husbands were found to be significant ($p = 0.045$) in relation to widows problems. Whereas a non-significant ($p = 0.998$) association between unwillingness to shoulder responsibilities of domestic chores for the second time was the reason behind denying remarriage and widows problems.

Table 2
Socio-cultural Obstacles to Remarriage and Widows' Problems

No	Statements	Responses	Widows' Problems			Statistics
			Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
1.	You abstained from remarriage because society does not accept/uphold widow remarriages	Agree	192 (49.7%)	87 (22.5%)	13 (3.4%)	x ² =3.524 p =0.005
		Disagree	35 (9.1%)	16 (4.1%)	6 (1.6%)	
		Don't know	25 (6.5%)	10 (2.6%)	2 (0.5%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	
2.	You do not want to remarry because you think that children will suffer as it will result children negligence in your second marriage	Agree	224 (58.0%)	98 (25.4%)	15 (3.9%)	x ² =13.559 p =0.009
		Disagree	18 (4.7%)	8 (2.1%)	6 (1.6%)	
		Don't Know	10 (2.6%)	7 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	
3.	You abstained from remarriage as your children are now adults	Agree	166 (43.0%)	72 (18.7%)	12 (3.1%)	x ² =2.950 p =0.566
		Disagree	75 (19.4%)	34 (8.8%)	9 (2.3%)	
		Don't know	11 (2.8%)	7 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	
4.	You do not remarry because in our society majority of widows devote their lives for children	Agree	156 (40.4%)	75 (19.4%)	12 (3.1%)	x ² =1.213 p =0.053
		Disagree	82 (21.2%)	24 (6.2%)	8 (2.1%)	
		Don't Know	14 (3.6%)	14 (3.6%)	1 (0.3%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	

5.	You have not remarried because your children did not give consent	Agree	152 (39.4%)	73 (18.9%)	10 (2.6%)	235 (60.9%)	x ² =9.380 p =0.052
		Disagree	89 (23.1%)	32 (8.3%)	7 (1.8%)	128 (33.2%)	
		Don't know	11 (2.8%)	8 (2.1%)	4 (1.0%)	23 (6.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
6.	You do not remarry as you did not find a suitable partner	Agree	74 (19.2%)	33 (8.5%)	6 (1.6%)	113 (29.3%)	x ² =0.810 p =0.937
		Disagree	155 (40.2%)	68 (17.6%)	14 (3.6%)	237 (61.4%)	
		Don't know	23 (6.0%)	12 (3.1%)	1 (0.3%)	36 (9.3%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
7.	You do not remarry because you cannot financially afford second marriage	Agree	130 (33.7%)	61 (15.8%)	9 (2.3%)	200 (51.8%)	x ² =1.411 p =0.842
		Disagree	103 (27.7%)	46 (11.9%)	10 (2.6%)	159 (41.2%)	
		Don't know	19 (4.9%)	6 (1.6%)	2 (0.5%)	27 (7.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
8.	Fear of death of your next husband prevented you from remarriage	Agree	30 (7.8%)	12 (3.1%)	1 (0.3%)	43 (11.1%)	x ² =3.863 p =0.425
		Disagree	197 (51.1%)	83 (21.5%)	18 (4.7%)	298 (77.2%)	
		Don't know	25 (6.5%)	18 (4.7%)	2 (0.5%)	45 (11.7%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
9.	The saying that it is inauspicious for a young man to marry a widow is/was an obstacle to your remarriage	Agree	84 (21.8%)	28 (7.3%)	3 (0.8%)	115 (29.8%)	x ² =10.058 p =0.039
		Disagree	125 (32.4%)	53 (13.7%)	11 (2.8%)	189 (49.0%)	
		Don't know	43 (11.1%)	32 (8.3%)	7 (1.8%)	82 (21.2%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
10.	Unemployed widow woman is not a suitable partner for male in our society	Agree	117 (30.3%)	54 (14.0%)	14 (3.6%)	185 (47.9%)	x ² =3.795 p =0.434
		Disagree	119 (30.8%)	52 (13.5%)	7 (1.8%)	178 (46.1%)	
		Don't Know	16 (4.1%)	7 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (6.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
11.	You have not remarried because of love, loyalty and respect you have for your late husband	Agree	207 (53.6%)	94 (24.4%)	14 (3.6%)	315 (81.6%)	x ² =9.733 p =0.045
		Disagree	25 (6.5%)	16 (4.1%)	3 (0.8%)	44 (11.4%)	
		Don't Know	20 (2.2%)	3 (0.8%)	4 (1.0%)	27 (7.0%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	
12.	Unwillingness to shoulder domestic responsibilities of domestic chores for the second time prevented you from remarriage	Agree	54 (14.0%)	24 (6.2%)	5 (1.3%)	83 (21.5%)	x ² =0.142 p =0.998
		Disagree	188 (48.7%)	84 (21.8%)	15 (3.9%)	287 (74.4%)	
		Don't Know	10 (2.6%)	5 (1.3%)	1 (0.3%)	16 (4.1%)	
		Total	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	386(100%)	

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that widows abstained from remarriage because society does not accept/uphold widows' remarriage. Fear of mistreatment in her second marriage was found and restricted widows from remarriage. They almost sacrifice their lives for their children and do not

remarry. Similarly, grownup children were not hindering factor in her remarriage. Usually, it is inauspicious for a young man to marry a widow, which is/was an obstacle to their marriage. Lacking of children's consent was also one of the reasons behind widows' unwillingness for remarriage. For the majority of the respondents, fear of the death of

their next husband prevents them from remarriage, while love, loyalty, and respect for their late husbands' were also reasons behind rejecting remarriage.

Conflict of Interests

The authors has declared that no competing interests exist.

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