

# Differentials in Married Women's Attitudes Towards Marriage Ordinance

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## ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to study the variation if any in the attitudes of the respondents of different characteristics i.e. age and education towards Marriage Ordinance Act 1997, (XXI). The universe for the present study was Gulberg Colony, Faisalabad city. A multistage random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 100 households. In each of the sample house one married female was selected as respondent of the study. Data were collected through comprehensive interview schedule. The findings revealed an association between the age of the respondents and the extent of their favorability towards Marriage Ordinance. However, there was no association between extent of favorability and education of the respondents.

**Key Words:** Marriage ordinance; Married women; Pakistan

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is not a mere convention, but an implicit condition of human society through which perpetuation of human becomes possible (Bergess & Locke, 1953).

Marriage in Pakistan is mostly arranged by the parents through the match makers while in some parts of the country the prospective husbands has to buy his partners by paying a handsome amount to the parents of the girl. Marriage through courtship is not encouraged even among urban highly aristocratic families in Pakistan. Marriage takes place with certain rituals, which are more or less formal ceremonies through which male and female enter into new bonds. Rituals prepare the couple psychologically for their prospective roles in the society and help them to adjust them selves to new role. The people of Pakistan are mostly endogamous i.e., marriage of an individual takes place within ones caste, ethnic group or class. Under normal circumstances and in the presence of the first wife a husband cannot have a second wife. If the couple is without issue or the wife has no objection to her husband's second marriage then there is no legal restriction and polygamy is allowed.

In Pakistan, marriage means series of ceremonies like mangni, dholak, mayun, mehndi and then formal ceremony of nikah and walima. Although these ceremonies are rooted in traditions and are source of enjoyment, yet the nature and extent of expenditure incurred on these ceremonies has created several social and economic problems in the society, especially for already hard pressed middle class families. Realizing the nature and extent of the problem, the Government of Pakistan had leveled an Ordinance known as Marriage Act, 1997, to stop the wasteful expenditure on marriage ceremonies, like serving meals, decorations, lighting and fire work (Govt. of Pakistan, 1997). The

present study was an attempt to know the attitudes and perceptions of urban married women towards the Ordinance with the following objectives: i) to study the attitudes of married women towards Marriage Ordinance, 1997, ii) to study the variation if any in the attitudes of the respondents of different characteristics i.e. age and education towards Marriage Ordinance, 1997, iii) to ascertain the respondents perceptions to make the Marriage Ordinance (1997) more acceptable and useful.

## METHDOLOGY

The universe for the present study was Gulberg Colony, Faisalabad City. A multistages random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 100 household. In each of the sample house, one married female was selected as respondent of the study. Data were collected through comprehensive interview schedule. The interview schedule consisted of structured and unstructured questions. The first part of interview schedule was concerned with the basic information about the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Second part dealt with respondent's attitudes/receptions regarding the Ordinance (ban on serving meals).

**Scaling and indexation of attitudinal statements.** The responses of the interviewees on attitude statements were recorded using the following response categories i.e. great extent, some extent and not at all. In order to quantify the responses, Likert type of scaling technique was used through assigning certain scores to each of the response (Hubort & Blalock, 1960; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1986). The scores for each respondent were then added. The range of total score on selected attitudes statements was between 23 to 43. To reflect the extent of favourability towards Marriage Ordinance, the respondents were categorized into

three categories i.e. low, medium and high favourability towards the Marriage Ordinance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Age.** Age is one of the important factors, which determine attitude, behaviour patterns, and decision-making role of the person. It is expected that with the increase in age maturity develop which enables the individuals to behave differently than in young age.

Table I shows that 21% of the respondents belonged to young category i.e., 20–30 years. Another 31% respondents were between 31–40 years. Remaining 26 and 22% respondents belonged to age category of 41–50 years and 51 years and above, respectively. About a half (48%) of the respondents were in the mature age group i.e. 41 years and above.

**Education.** Education is defined as “method of influencing human behaviour”. Such that it fits into prevailing pattern of social interaction and organization. Education is another important characteristic, which is regarded significant for variations in attitudes. In the present study, the researcher has taken education of respondents as well as of their husband’s educational level.

Table II reveals that 12% respondents were illiterate. Another 18 and 9% had education up to Primary and Middle level, respectively. About one fourth (33%) were educated up to Matric level. However, 20 and 15% were educated up to F.A., B.A. level. A small proportion i.e. 3% was educated up to M.A. level. It is found that majority (61%) of the respondents were matriculate or had higher level of education.

As to husband’s education, only 2% were illiterate. However, 10, 12 and 20% had education up to Primary, Middle and Matric level respectively. The proportion of graduates and post-graduates were 26 and 17%, respectively. Another 4% husbands had earned highest academic degree i.e. Ph.D. A little less than a half (47%) of the respondent’s husbands had graduation or higher level of education.

**Attitudes of respondents towards marriage ordinance.** The attitudes of the respondents towards Marriage Ordinance and their perception of the changing trends in marriage practices were assessed and analyzed. Further their perception of positive or negative impacts, if any on the families or society have also been assessed and presented in the following pages.

As data Table III indicate that 85% of the respondents said the Marriage Ordinance i.e. ban on serving of meals were desirable action of the government. Only 15% did not agree that the ordinance was a desirable action on the part of the government.

Further probe into the reasons for approving the Ordinance revealed that 60% of the respondents believed that the action of government has brought relief to the poor and middle class families in the society. However, another

**Table I. Percentage distribution of the respondents with regard to their age**

Age Categories (In Year)	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 30	21	21.0
31 – 40	31	31.0
41 – 50	26	26.0
51 +	22	22.0
Total	100	100.0

Mean age = 22.35 years

**Table II. Percentage distribution of the respondents and of their husbands with regard to their educational level**

Educational (Level)	Percentage Distribution	
	Frequency	Husbands (%)
Illiterate	12.0	2.0
Primary	18.0	10.0
Middle	9.0	12.0
Matric	23.0	20.0
F.A.	20.0	9.0
B.A. + B.Com/B.Sc.	15.0	26.0
M.A./MBBS	3.0	17.0
Ph.D.	0.0	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0

**Table III. Percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to their desirability of the ordinance.**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Desirable	85	85.0
Undesirable	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0

**Table IV. Respondents perception of people’s reaction/attitudes towards ordinance was also assess and perceived**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Desirable	87	87.0
Undesirable	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

**Table V. Association between age of the respondent and extent of their favourability towards marriage ordinance**

Age Category in (Year)	Extent of Favourability			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
20 – 30	7 (33.3)	12 (57.1)	2 (9.5)	21 (100.0)
31 – 40	2 (6.5)	28 (90.3)	1 (3.2)	31 (100.0)
40 +	6 (12.5)	36 (75.6)	6 (22.5)	48 (100.0)
Total	15 (15.0)	76 (76.0)	9 (9.0)	100 (100.0)

Chi-Square = 10.64954 Significant level = .0396 d.f = 4

15% mentioned that ordinance/ban on serving meals were desirable because of its positive results in saving time and money. Another 10% respondents were of the view that ban on serving meals was a positive step in checking pump and show will ultimately result in inculcating the culture of simplicity and austerity among people.

**Table VI. Association between educational status of the respondent and extent of their favourability towards marriage ordinance**

Educational (Level)	Extent of Favourability			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Illiterate	2 (16.7)	9 (75.0)	1 (8.3)	12 (100.0)
Primary and Middle	4 (22.2)	14 (77.8)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)
Matric and F.A.	7 (13.5)	38 (73.1)	7 (13.5)	52 (100.0)
B.A./B.Sc. & above	2 (11.1)	15 (83.3)	1 (5.6)	18 (100.0)
Total	15 (15.0)	76 (76.0)	9 (9.0)	100 (100.0)

Chi-Square = 4.11984 Significant level = 6605 d.f. =6

However, 15% respondents who did not appreciate the idea of ban on meals, 6% of them thought that it was against the customs and their family traditions. Another 7% believed that ban has created problem especially for "Barat". A small proportion i.e. 2% mentioned that it was embarrassing/disappointing for guests also.

Significant majority of respondents i.e. 87% perceived that people as a positive/desirable action on the part of government have received the ordinance. Only 13% respondents believed that people did not accept this ordinance as desirable action.

The perceived reasons for accepting the ordinance was reported to be more or less same (as in table IV) by general public i.e. financial relief for the parents (55%) and unnecessary waste of time and money (28%). However, 4% respondents specifically mentioned that restriction on serving meal was great relief to brides families.

**Differentials in attitudes towards marriage ordinance.** Although it was an exploratory study, yet the respondent made an attempt to ascertain the relationship between the extents of favourability of respondents with two independent variables i.e. age and education of the respondents.

'Extent of favourability' of attitudes of the respondents towards Marriage Ordinance (Act XXI, 1997) was ascertained by assigning scores to the attitude statements (using Likert Type Scale), the respondents were then categorized into three categories i.e. high, medium and low, favourability.

Statistical test of chi-square in Table V shows that there is association between the age of the respondents and the extent of their favourability towards Marriage Ordinance. However, percentage test shows that the

association between the two variables is positive.

Value of Chi-square in Table VI shows that there was no association between the educational status and extent of favourability of the respondents.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

About a half of the respondents were in mature age group. A majority of the respondents had Matric and higher levels of education. A little less than a half (47%) of the respondent's husband had graduation or higher level of education. A huge majority of the respondents said the Marriage Ordinance i.e., ban on serving of meals was desirable action of the government. Majority of the respondents believed that the action of government has brought relief to the poor and middle class families in the society. They mentioned that ordinance/ban on serving meals was desirable because of its positive results in saving time, money and in checking pump and show. It will ultimately result in inculcating the culture of simplicity and austerity among people. Age of the respondents was found to be positively associated with the extent of favourability towards Marriage Ordinance Act 1997 (XXI). However, there was no association between extent of favourability and education of the respondents.

The study was aimed at finding the attitudes of married females. Keeping in view the importance of the problem, the attitudes of male members should also be studied. Furthermore, the present study has been conducted on a very small sample. Nature of study demands that attitudes of larger section of population be sought to produce a better basis for the generalization of the study findings.

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