

Unemployment and its Effects on the Institution of Marriage: A Sociological Study of Baramulla District

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Abstract: The social life and other social institutions of Muslims are based on the Islam, the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad PBUH are the main sources of Muslim culture and traditions. But throughout the world the customs and traditions of Muslims are not the same as several other factors determine the conduct of life in the contemporary society. The Muslim communities in India are deeply influenced by the Hindu customs and in the valley of Kashmir the changes are evident as marriage patterns among the Kashmiri Muslims have changed after the accession of the state with the union of India. According to Islamic law every Muslim who is adult (age of puberty) 15 years old is fit for getting married. In past the average age of marriage among the Muslim boys in the valley was 18-22 and in case of girls it was 15-20 as marriage was mostly arranged by the parents and other members of the family. The family while arranging the marriage looked for the property of the family and their social status, the number of domestic animals, agricultural land etc were the areas of investigation. However from the last three decades the perceptions of the youth changed due to various socio-cultural and political developments in the state. The growth and expansion of education among the youth, particularly among girls have deeply affected the institution of marriage and other social institutions. The present study will highlight the relationship between the institution of marriage and employment of the youth in Kashmir.

Key words: Tradition, Transition, Aspirations, Gender, Employment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Muslims use the word Nikah for marriage, Nikah is an Arabic word which literally means sensual union of man and woman. Among Muslim marriage is more a contract than a religious ceremony. Nikah or marriage is an unwritten contract the real intention of which is to produce children and declare them legal (D. Mulla). Muslim marriage is predominantly an agreement, whose intention is to give legal sanction to sexual relationships and producing children and to determine the rights and duties of the children in order to regulate social life. The patterns of marriage however are different from society to society; the Kashmiri Muslims marriages are very different from the marriage among the Muslims living in other parts of the country. With the expansion of science and technology the youth in the valley interact with other parts of the world and it has effected in their attitude regarding social and political issues. Marriage which was previously arranged by parents is now arranged mostly by partners with the consent of the parents. The transition from rural to urban and from agricultural to non-

agricultural sectors of economy has changed the perceptions of the people. Nowadays both in rural and urban areas at the time of tying up the knot the property of the father of the groom and the number of domestic animals are not considered a condition for marriage. The important and trending issue to be taken into consideration is the job of the groom, his business, education, and if the boy happens to be a government employ the chances are higher that the boy will get a bride from the family of higher social status and caste despite the boy belongs to lower social and caste hierarchy. The government or settled business man will get offer from the urban areas, if the boy belongs to rural pr far flung area this is the trending transition in our society. In 2009 a study was carried out by the department of sociology university of Kashmir under the supervision of one of the prominent sociologists Dr Bashir Ahmad Dabla, "*Emergence of Late Marriage Among Kashmir*". The study reveals that besides caste considerations, generation gap, modernization, religious attitudes and behavioural, unemployment was the main cause of delaying marriage in Kashmir. In his study Dr Dabla surveyed a sample of 2500 individuals and after collecting the data the study revealed that the marriage age for men in Kashmir was 28 years, and were getting married at age over 32 years, at the same time in case of women, the desirable age was 26 years, but they were getting married at the age of 28 years and above. Social and religious thinkers have raised the issue of delayed and late marriages among the Muslims in Kashmir valley, as it has various negative aspects on society. The preference of youth to their higher studies has put them in a condition where they are not founding a place in the society; they are either unemployed or have job profile which is not suitable for them.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bashir Ahmad Dabla (2007) "*Emergence of late Marriage in Kashmir*" In his study the pioneer sociologist found out that the emergence of late marriage was the result of host of social issues. With the change in the some aspects of the society the effects of such were felt on other aspects too. According to him unemployment, expensiveness of marriage functions, pursuance of higher education and dowry system where the main cause of delaying marriages in Kashmir.

Kapur (1976) feels that, marriage in Kashmir generally a family affair which was arranged by parents. Polygamy was practiced only by few will to do men. Kapur who is talking about old time's writes that the sultan did not cross the legally

prescribed limit of four wives. The common Muslims according to Kapur also follow Monogamy in mostly, though remarriage and especially widow remarriage is accepted among Kashmiri Muslims. This was considered a great feature of Kashmiri society as it reduces the rate of dependent people. But with the passage of time this trend is dying especially among Kashmiri widows. Widows in Kashmir prefer to live with their children rather than to remarry

Higher Education and Unemployed youth

The present scenario in Kashmir valley presents a grave situation before the administrators of the state as the number of unemployed youth is increasing in an alarming rate. The situation gets worsened when youth who have completed their higher studies like Doctorates and other professional courses spending huge amounts with no career opportunities. This increasing unemployment is directly with other social institutions like it is very difficult to find a suitable match for a person who has completed his education and is without job, as he will be weighed negatively in society. The youth after completing their education are not able to adopt themselves in other working conditions different from their field of study. Another dark side of the society is that there is no private sector available in Kashmir other than horticulture and allied sectors and work in these sectors is seasonal and there is already surplus labour available in the market for these sectors as well. In these circumstances the educated youth both and girls are in a state of trauma because the society is not encouraging them and are exploited by the private institutions as they are paid 3000 to 5000 per month. In this way the people who used their resources on education in hope of better future got struck and the most humiliation they feel is at the time of their marriage when they are rejected on the grounds of being unemployed. There are other factors which led to the late or delayed marriages in society like the extravagances in marriage functions and the poor cannot afford such expenses and in last the social status of an individual is determined by his class in the present era and the people who are unemployed generally got rejected at the time of arranging a marriage. However the most important factor responsible for the late marriages is the growing unemployment in society. Though government has launched several financial schemes to uplift the youth of the valley, but the tradition of government job is proving a nuisance in this step forward. As per report over 25000 girls in the valley approached the state government during the past two years to seek financial help under various schemes.

Job preference:

In its economic report for the year 2016 the Jammu and Kashmir government has stated that 24.6 percent of its population in the age group of 18-29 was unemployed. In 2017 another report by the centre for monitoring Indian economy in collaboration with Bombay stock exchange declares Jammu and Kashmir as the state with highest unemployed rate in India, 12.13 percent. There are various

causes which are responsible for this serious concern in the state like the political and social conditions as well as the turmoil which badly affected the entire society. The youth prefer government jobs which are impossible and in the same time there is no healthy private sector which could absorb the unemployed youth. In this age of globalization, liberalization and privatization Kashmiri prefer government job and once they get the job in any of the department their social status gets added and the offers of the marriage will come and they will be asked to choose now among the girls by the professional middleman locally known as (Manzimyore). The social structure of Kashmir is reflecting that if a boy from a lower social status or caste will get a government job he will get a bride from the family of higher social status. The middleman who will arrange a government employ for the girl, the family will pay huge amount of money and other items to the middleman. Apart from the government sector there are other sectors which employ the youth like private medical companies, several NGOs etc. But the preferable sector among the youth is government sector. There is a healthy relationship between a job profile of an individual and his marriage. In Kashmir the more the people have education and job chances the better they will get in marriage.

III. DATA AND METHODS

Participants:

The participants in this study were 300 unmarried boys between the age group of 20-26. The respondents were chosen from the Baramulla district of the valley. The researcher formulated an interview schedule and respondents were asked to fill up the schedule with simple questions. The data collected then was analyzed separately.

Procedure:

Primary and secondary sources were used in the study. In the present research the techniques of personal interviews and formal and informal discussions. The relevant data from was collected from published documents, reports and interactions. Secondary sources like books, journals, articles and newspapers were used for the present study. The responses of the respondents are given in the table below on the question regarding the question on does late marriage occurs in Kashmir among the Muslims. The table below shows the responses from the respondents.

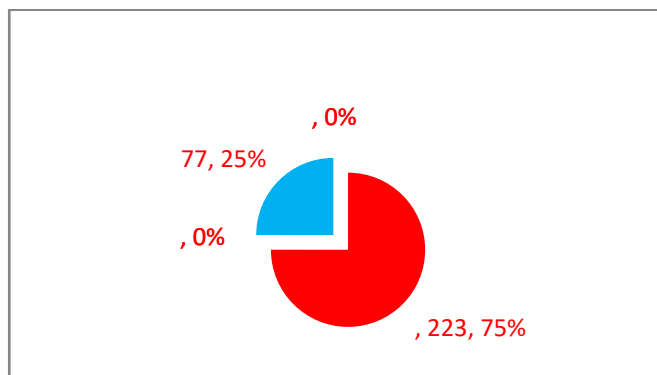
Table: No. 1 Late Marriage occurs among Muslims in Kashmir

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	223	74.3
No	77	25.7
Total	300	100

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Islam commanded its followers that once your children crossed the age of puberty you should marry them. The jurists from various schools of thought have their collective

conscience that 15 years are ideal for marriage. But the grave concern of the valley is that late marriage has become a fashion among the Muslims, which has affected the socio-demographic spheres of the society. Social thinkers, sociologists, religious scholars and doctors have raised the issue of late marriage. Though there are various factors responsible for the occurrence of late or delayed marriages among the Muslims, table above shows the responses of the respondents regarding this. The above table shows that about 74 per cent revealed that late marriage occur among Muslims in Kashmir. Looking at present times no parents are willing to marry their wards in the state of un-employment and keeping this in mind during the survey for the collection the respondents revealed that they will, or not ready to marry till they will not get a suitable employment. The table also shows that about 26 per cent were of the opinion that late marriages do not occur in the valley. They were of the opinion that it is the changing social structure which changed the average age of marriage, as now days a number of other things are taken into consideration before tying the knot of the marriage. The above data has been depicted in the chart below.



The impact of the unemployment on the institution of the marriage is evident from the fact that most of the youth delaying their marriage because they are not ready to face the harsh conditions which they are dare of in their married life. In this global world the youth are aware of the fact once they got married they will have to support their family economically and without proper employment they did not want enter into the contract. While survey the researcher asked the question regarding the cause of late marriage to the respondents and the responses are given below in the table;

Table: No.2 The response from the respondents regarding the cause of late marriage

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployment	97	43.49
Pursuing higher education	48	21.52
Dowry system	32	14.34
Expenditure of marriage functions	35	15.69
Housing problems	11	4.93
Total	223	100

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Late marriage is a grave concern and no community will be in favour of its existence in the society. The valley of Kashmir has witnessed a number of turmoil from the 1990 and its accord with Indian union has put the heaven of the earth into the state of hell. The unavailability of private sector, limited number of government sector jobs, corruption and other social and political issues has put a vast number of youth into the category of unemployment which is the leading cause of the late marriages according to the responses of the respondents shown in the table. The above table also shows that besides unemployment the youth who are going for higher studies which takes the peak years of their life and after completing their studies they could not find a suitable life partner for them resulting in the late marriage, the above table shows that about 21 per cent respondents were of the opinion that pursuing higher education is also a reason of late marriages among Muslims in Kashmir. In Kashmir dowry is not common but in case of girls while thinking of marriage they are bound to make arrangement of copper utensils, expensive suits, golden ornaments for in-laws etc for her in-laws. The above table shows that 14 per cent respondents were of the opinion that dowry is also responsible for late marriage among Kashmiris. About 16 per cent respondents revealed that the expensiveness of marriage functions is also responsible for late marriage. The expenditure on wazwan, golden jewellery, lighting and decoration etc, are the customs which a poor and middle class cannot afford hence it leads to delay in marriage. Whereas according to the above table some of the respondents about 6 per cent revealed that housing problem also leads to delay in marriage.

From the above table it is indicated that the major factor contributing to the growth of late marriages among the Muslims of Kashmir is unemployment. However there are other factors like the pursuing of higher education and expenses on marriage, and the housing factor which are directly connected to the economic status of an individual. People prefer to marry after the end of their studies and by the time they complete their education their age gone above 30 years. Now they look for better job, but unfortunately due to competition they find themselves in a condition where there is no job available for them and this leads to delay in their marriage. Also due to heavy expense on marriage functions people find it difficult to marry their wards and it is very difficult to find a suitable partner for ones ward in present society.

IV. CONCLUSION

The most important time in life is when one gets married and begins his/her affinal relationship. From the ancient times men and women come in close contact with each other in a relationship and with the growth of civilization the ties of marriage strengthened this relationship and the important institutions of family and kinship develops. Man and woman are bestowed with some natural elements of attraction and in every society the legal sanction to these relationships is none another than the institution of marriage. The age at marriage is

proven scientifically that after attaining the maturity or above certain fixed age one should get married. The important function of marriage is to reproduce children and science has proved that the fruitful years for marriage are between 18-22 years and after that the fertility rate among the couple's declines. Kashmir being the Muslim dominated region is caught in the situation where the rate of late marriage is rising with passing of each day. Unemployment among the youth is one of the major causes of delayed marriages in the valley; with youth find it difficult to carry on the burden of marriage. Social thinkers and religious scholars are worried about the disturbance of social structure due to late or delayed marriages.

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