

The Secular Government and Media are Destroying the Islamic Family Values in Pakistan

The role of 'Government' in preventing the decline of family life is underestimated. 'Marriage' which plays the role of nucleus in a society is facing multiple challenges all caused by the negligence of the government in understanding the basic needs of people and defective implementation of required laws which are very clearly defined by the Quran and Sunnah.

Long gone are the times in Pakistan as in the rest of the world when you met satisfied people. Men who would rush back to their homes, which are supposed to provide peace because of their inhabitants. Wives waiting for the husbands with good food on the table and stories to share. Perfection in the actions of individuals is not for this world but Allah has certainly created a perfect system for man and in it he will find a decent happy way to spend his life and fulfil his needs and also to prepare for the Hereafter. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Quran: **﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا﴾** ***“And one of His signs is that He has created for you, spouses from amongst yourselves so that you might take comfort in them and He has placed between you, love and mercy. In this there is surely evidence (of the truth) for the people who carefully think.”*** [TMQ 30:21]

Not only has getting married become difficult, but to make it work has become a bigger test. The material standards set by society are unachievable and the media plays an important role in giving directions to young minds. "The disposable culture" has taken over the desire of fixing the reparable, resulting in broken homes, unhappy empowered women pretending to be strong, lonely men trying to earn more to achieve the unachievable desired status and confused children. There are multiple factors ruining Muslim family life and marriages. The divorce rate has gone up and the majority of youth prefer a delay in getting married. According to data, 13,299 Khula cases (divorce initiated by women) were reported in the Punjab in 2012, which later rose to 14,243 in 2013, and in 2014, they went up to 16,942. In 2016, they have increased to 18,901. The reason for this hefty increase has been cited as "economic, emotional awareness in women, outer interference in married life and others."

Ignorance about the importance of marriage:

Marriage is the origin of all relationships and all of them branch out from it and this depicts the importance of this institution in the building of a healthy society. In Pakistani society a marriage is not just a union of two individuals but a union of two families. Most young people get into marriage ready to judge each other by the opinion of another. These opinions are formed by observing a society that comprises Hindu values, Islamic sentiments and western desires. Liberal freedoms and fun attending mixed parties after work and at universities, and other events that encourage free socialising between the sexes, promoted by the government and its institutions are causing another kind of unrest. Extramarital affairs and desire for delay in marriage is becoming common.

Rasool Allah (saw) said, **«يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ»** ***“O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married.”***

Economic Factor:

Marriage in every society, besides giving emotional and social benefits, gives an economic solution as well. Islam has described in detail financial matters, defining the man as the provider with women and children having a right over his earnings. What we see is a race that has no end: engagement rings are getting larger with the debt piled up on the different debit cards in the groom's wallet. In 2016, this Third World country witnessed a wedding that was celebrated for more than 6 months with images and interviews splashed all over the newspapers and media, setting a new standard for a dream wedding.

Mass poverty caused by government failure in managing the economy as well as higher economic lifestyle expectations, promoted by the media, also sends many middle and lower-middle class husbands abroad in search of the good life, leaving wife and children behind, leading to a gap between the couple to the extent that the desire to live together dies. 2014 data released by the government shows the number of migrants moving abroad for better employment opportunities is 752,466. These men live in very poor conditions to earn money to send back home. The other solution sought for fulfilling economic needs is women working. This is no longer left as a choice for these women but has become a necessity and is ruining the family system as both partners feel that they are overworked, underpaid and not well taken care of at home by their spouse and this they start believing is due to the absence of "LOVE". As a result, family courts witness daily heart-breaking scenes of children screaming and running to, or away from, one parent to another.

Cocktail of cultures in the guise of religion:

Culture is mostly accepted by people as it is. It is there to be followed and governments can change it drastically if they so wish. We as Muslims need to see very closely where our values are coming from and if they are contradicting or challenging Islam. Kemalist Turkey is an example of redefining a society's culture for political benefits based upon the secular belief. This change has spread like a disease to the whole of the Muslim world.

Though Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, not for a day has it truly witnessed Islamic culture. We left behind the Hindus of India but we silently accepted and kept practising elements of the Hindu culture. In Hindu culture, women, especially in marriage, have no rights. This was automatically adopted as Muslim culture because the Muslims of Pakistan were practising it. Furthermore, heavy dowry paid by the girl's side to the boy's side as practiced in Hindu culture became a norm as a guarantee of a stable marriage for daughters. Those who could not afford the dowry struggled to get their girls married or ended up getting loans on interest and spending the rest of their lives paying them off and setting the wrong example for their children of how important such dowry is. As a result of adopting this Hindu custom, the '80's and '90's witnessed the worst kind of domestic abuse: 'stove bursting' - the easiest way of getting rid of a woman whose fault is that she did not bring enough dowry to the family she married into. All this was happening while there was an Act making giving or asking for such a dowry a punishable offense. This gave a chance to the foreign-funded NGOs to blame Islam and bring in Western values of women's freedom as well as attack other Islamic laws such as the allowance of polygamy and encouragement of early marriage. The existence, flourishing, and even promotion of such destructive non-Islamic culture and practices was presided over by successive secular governments in Pakistan who were disinterested or incapable of addressing

these problems. This is because their main aim was to preserve their seats of power and work as pawns of Western governments in promoting their secular agenda on the country, including upon the Muslim family structure, rather than to ensure harmonious family units through the promotion of the Islamic culture and laws.

Domestic abuse:

Pakistan ranks as third most dangerous country for women to live in. According to a report, four in every five women face some form of domestic abuse in Pakistan. Islam teaches men to treat their wives with respect and love. Muslims in their behaviour are supposed to be role models for the whole world so they can attract people towards *haq*. How can such lowly behaviour be blamed on Islamic culture? This actually is against it.

In his last sermon, the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) especially mentioned the rights of women over their men: «أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ عَلَى نِسَائِكُمْ حَقًّا وَلَهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا، ... فَإِنْ انْتَهَيْنَ فَلَهُنَّ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكَسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا، فَإِنَّهُنَّ عِنْدَكُمْ عَوَانٍ لَا يَمْلِكْنَ لِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ شَيْئًا، وَإِنَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانَةٍ» ***O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers.***

Various politicians and governments have paid lip service to this problem over the years. However, they have utterly failed to address this issue or even reduce it in the slightest. In fact their promotion of the liberal values in education and through the sanctioning of the existence of the western-based entertainment industry within the state which objectifies and degrades the status of women and encourages men to act upon their desires has exacerbated domestic abuse against women. This is alongside these governments turning a blind eye to the existence of non-Islamic Hindu culture in the society which devalues the status of women and is also a major contributing factor to violence against them.

Reforms made by the Government

The Council of Islamic Ideology was formed in 1962 and its role was to advise legislative assemblies on Islamization of laws in Pakistan. Since then its role has been of raising and drawing attention to the issues in a very immature and irresponsible way. A recent example is the 2014 reviewing of marriage laws and declaring them un-Islamic, ignoring the fact that the whole Governmental System is un-Islamic. This is alongside bringing forth distorted versions of the Islamic family system and starting a debate regarding that. For example, setting an age limit for marriage does not bring stability as the very same couple will face the same circumstances whether they marry five years later or earlier. For men, job ratios will be the same and for women better health facilities will still be a dream. Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 1929 sets the legal age for marriage to 16 for women and 18 for men. Getting married young is not the cause of the crisis in family life but rather it is the non-Islamic values and laws within the state which create unfavourable conditions for marriage and nurture wrong expectations and behaviour within marriage and the family unit that leads to tension and division. Nor is early marriage the cause of the high level of maternal mortality and complications during pregnancy and childbirth in Pakistan. Rather, the cause is the inadequate level

and quality of healthcare provided by the state. According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2006-07 and UNICEF, Pakistan has an alarmingly high maternal mortality rate (276 maternal deaths per 100,000 births) with an estimated 20,000 women losing their lives every year due to causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Media

In Pakistan, on one hand we have media representatives like Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy depicting the atrocities afflicting women. On the other we have magazines and TV dramas encouraging women to rebel and demand Western-defined freedoms. This is alongside sanctifying the concept of individuals pursuing and acting on their selfish whims and desires which contributes to crimes against women. Furthermore, the media portrays superficial, unrealistic expectations of love which, when not found by the young couple in marriage, results in disappointment, resentment, heartache and disputes. Many TV dramas challenge Muslim family values by portraying attraction between the very delicate relationships like brother-in-law and sister-in-law, a friend's father, etc. Hence, deliberately, the forbidden is being romanticised, ignoring the fact that the Prophet (saw) said, «إِيَّاكُمْ وَالِدُخُولَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ» فَقَالَ «رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَرَأَيْتَ الْحَمُو؟ قَالَ: «الْحَمُو الْمَوْتُ» **“Beware of entering upon the ladies.”** A man from the Ansar said, "Allah's Apostle! What about Al-Hamu [the in-laws of the wife] (the brothers of her husband or his nephews etc.)?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: **“The in-laws of the wife are death itself.”**

The Turkish drama *Forbidden Love* was dubbed in Urdu and showed countrywide, portraying the kind of love that has no place in Islam. Recently an old Indian film *Masoom* was remade for Pakistani television showing a happily married man having an illicit affair and a child from that affair, and all this was justified in the name of love. This type of portrayal not only makes a crime look attractive but also puts suspicion in people's minds and can ruin a peaceful marriage.

Solution:

All these ills and their effects have only one solution and that is the complete implementation of the Shariah, where rights and duties are well defined and courts act as facilitators of justice according to the Ahkam of Allah (swt). Only the establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood will make us see the true face of the Islamic Family system and a society based on it. In the absence of it, the Bills like the Women Protection Bill will keep coming, and humiliating us while solving nothing. Islam radically changed the Makkan Society which was at its worst and so will it do for Pakistan and all the Muslim lands Insha Allah. Only abiding by the Rule of Allah can bring us good in this world and in the Hereafter.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ﴾

“O you who believe! Preserve yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is mankind and stones.” [At-Tahrim: 6]

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