

6-17-2013

## Impact of Exchange Marriage on Children in Pakistan: Social Security or Insecurity?

Muhammed Zaman

Quaid-i-Azam University, zaman@uni-leipzig.de

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>



Part of the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), and the [Social Statistics Commons](#)

---

### Recommended APA Citation

Zaman, M. (2013). Impact of Exchange Marriage on Children in Pakistan: Social Security or Insecurity?. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(24), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1504>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).

---



**THE QUALITATIVE REPORT**  
DISCOVER ONE OF OUR VIRTUAL  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WORKSHOPS  
WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS.

JOIN US ONLINE. LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE. BOOK YOURS NOW!

**TQR**  
THE QUALITATIVE REPORT  
WHERE THE WORLD COMES TO LEARN  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

## Impact of Exchange Marriage on Children in Pakistan: Social Security or Insecurity?

### Abstract

In this paper I deal with the impact of the exchange marriage system in Pakistan. The system does not only guide in spouse selection, but it is also provide welfare, alliance formation and give strength to kinship. No part of the study, however, dealt with the impact of the system on children anywhere in the world. Based on the qualitative investigation, this article highlights 24 case histories. The Grounded Theory Method guidelines are followed for the data collection and analysis. There are different dimensions of the exchange marriage. However, this study reveals child engagement/marriage (even before the birth), forced marriages, mismatch marriage, violence and emergence of domestic conflict in the system of the exchange. This study found drug addiction among children, off and on the street children, children with broken homes, neglected children, and delinquency is due to the system of the marriage. Exchange marriage does not only provide social security and alliance formation but also insecurity and obscured socialization of the children. It is important to have looked on the system of the exchange in development perspective of the future generation. This study highlights the impact of the exchange marriage system among illiterate or low educated people only who strictly follow the system of the exchange.

### Keywords

Exchange Marriage, Traditions and Children, Child Abuse, Social Security, Pakistan

### Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

## **Impact of Exchange Marriage on Children in Pakistan: Social Security or Insecurity?**

Muhammad Zaman

Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad Pakistan

---

*In this paper I deal with the impact of the exchange marriage system in Pakistan. The system does not only guide in spouse selection, but it is also provide welfare, alliance formation and give strength to kinship. No part of the study, however, dealt with the impact of the system on children anywhere in the world. Based on the qualitative investigation, this article highlights 24 case histories. The Grounded Theory Method guidelines are followed for the data collection and analysis. There are different dimensions of the exchange marriage. However, this study reveals child engagement/marriage (even before the birth), forced marriages, mismatch marriage, violence and emergence of domestic conflict in the system of the exchange. This study found drug addiction among children, off and on the street children, children with broken homes, neglected children, and delinquency is due to the system of the marriage. Exchange marriage does not only provide social security and alliance formation but also insecurity and obscured socialization of the children. It is important to have looked on the system of the exchange in development perspective of the future generation. This study highlights the impact of the exchange marriage system among illiterate or low educated people only who strictly follow the system of the exchange. Keywords: Exchange Marriage, Traditions and Children, Child Abuse, Social Security, Pakistan*

---

### **Introduction**

An exchange marriage refers to a control mate selection system in which a family gives a daughter/sister to be married with a son/brother to the second family. The second family reciprocates their female with the first family. The process of the marriage initiates from the birth of a child or even before in Pakistan. If, a family does not have a girl to reciprocate, the family promises a female child to reciprocate, if born in future. Any positive or negative action is reciprocated in the system, not only materially but also socially in Pakistan (Zaman, 2008, 2009; Zaman & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010). This system of the exchange shares almost one third marriages of rural parts of Pakistan (Jacoby & Mansuri, 2008).

Exchange marriage is perceived as alliance formation, welfare, wellbeing, socio-cultural interests and kinship formation (Bearman, 1997; Bourdieu, 1998; Lévi-Strauss, 1969; Molloy, 1986). Above quoted studies highlighted the different dimensions of the system of the exchange marriage in parts of the world (Schweizer & White, 1998; Strathern, 1984; Tapper, 1991; Zaman, 2010). However, they never consider insecurity and the impact of the system of the exchange on children and couples. The children who are born with the exchanged couples remain vulnerable. They are unsecure and victim of the couples' mutual conflict. These children are also without social security and benefits from the state because welfare agenda of common man is not in the third world including Pakistan.

Theoretically, two approaches examine the system: structuralist and individualistic perspectives. The structuralists analyze the phenomenon as a "build-in" issue in the social structure where conflicts among actors are integral part, but they are unable to bring the social

change (Bourdieu, 1998; Lévi-Strauss, 1969; Schweizer & White, 1998). In this perspective, actors are mere appendix of the collective activities. This means that the people have no say rather they follow what the group or community say to them (Zaman, 2011). They could not spend life with their own choice and remain without autonomy of their social action.

However, individualistic (Bearman, 1998; Bourdieu, 1998) approach negates the structural dominance and argues that the actor as a whole controls the fate and destiny. This perspective negates the social condition, cultural context and “rules of the game” (Zaman, 2011). Actor is dominant on the structural control.

Nonetheless, both perspectives, in analyzing the system of exchange, have hardly focused on the fate of the children--a weak and totally dependent segment of a society empirically as well as theoretically. The children are on the receiving end of the tradition in the early life and when reach in maturity, they reproduce them. If some of them become deviant of such tradition, they are vulnerable and dependent on the rules of the game. For example, in Pakistan, a person is supposed to follow the “will” of the parents/elders in order to get married, mostly on the basis of the exchange. If he/she do not follow this rule, he/she cannot marry in rural areas of Pakistan. If the couple of the exchange marriage is not happy on their marriage arrangements, their children will be victim of the parents’ enmity. Children seem to be more vulnerable in the system of exchange than any other marriage. Hardly, the literature on the subject has investigated it seriously. This article deals with these children living under the system of the exchange marriage. This article shed light on the impact of the system exchange on the children.

## Methods

I conducted interviews with the exchanged couple, their parents and their children who were near to get married in future in the community of Kabirwala, South Punjab Pakistan during my PhD fieldwork in 2005 to 2007. This study was conducted by following the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) in order to collect and analyze the data. The GTM gives in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon in intimate relationship as well as in cultural settings. A researcher can develop a substantive conception of the social phenomenon with the help of the GTM. Thus, GTM was appropriate for familial and cultural investigations (Zaman, 2011). According to the GTM guidelines, a researcher digs out the codes, concepts and themes from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 2002).

I requested a friend who introduced me to the community. I started to live with one family in the village. Initially, I briefed respondents about my study and its objectives and received consent of the interview. Majority of them agreed to give information. However, three females turn downed the request. Based on the individual and family interviews (48) on the issue of the marriage, I compiled 24 family case histories. Two of the interviewees were single spouses. I added the parents (who arranged the marriages) and informal conversation with children (who are suppose to be marry in near future) to know their perspectives of the system.

The researcher requested a spouse to tell me the story of their marriage and come across the local notion of “*watta satta*” means exchange marriage. To verify this notion, the researcher requested to the second respondent about the notion of the exchange. The researcher found variation in the point of the views between the two respondents. To verify, the researcher requested the third respondent to clear me about the concept. After this, the researcher compiled the similarities and differences in order to develop concepts and themes as per GTM guidelines.

During the fieldwork, the researcher found some distinctive cases of the marriage where children were victim of this tradition. Beside the main fieldwork (carried out in 2006

and 2007), he re-confirmed the data in 2011 for this article on phone with the respondents and their children who were victim of the tradition in order to know the difficulties faced by the children in the system of the exchange. Owing to the fieldwork in 2006 and 2007, the researcher became friend of the respondents. Therefore, the researcher did not face any problem to get information regarding the children difficulty in 2011. Further, he also got formal consent of the respondents in order to maintain the ethical standard of the research. However, he also maintained the privacy of the respondents up to the maximum level. Pseudonyms names of the respondents were used in the data in order to protect their privacy.

Additionally, the researcher was continuously counter checking the validity and reliability (through NGOs reports and media coverage on the issues). To get comprehensive understanding, the researcher also conducted eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the stakeholders (parents, children, community influential, and community social workers). This was another check to make the data rigorous.

## Results

I focus on the findings of the data while giving case histories. First case history is related to two children who have experience to be victim of the parental enmity.

Azhar<sup>1</sup> is a 10 year-old boy whose parents were married on the basis of the exchange. After his birth, the parents of Azhar were angry and quarrel with each other on domestic affairs. The father accuses the mother of Azhar. She became annoyed and went to his family of procreation and demanded divorce. His father demanded that Azhar is his son and he has a right to take him from the mother. However, the mother went to a local jury (*punjait*) in order to claim her child. The father tells the jury: “my wife is not of a superior character and I am skeptic for the socialization of Azhar.” The mother of Azhar was also skeptic. The jury decided the child will spend 15 days with mother and 15 days with his father. In reciprocity, the second exchanged couple started quarrel as per norm of the system. They also have to be separated as per rules of the game in response to the first couple. Similar conditions were design for the son of the second couple who is Munir, an 8 year-old boy. Now the mothers of Azhar and Munir try to give horrific image of their fathers to both children. Blame game started among couples in front of children. Both of the children do not know about the reason of the fight of their parents, but they were angry with each other. Azhar accuse Munir and Munir reciprocate as per his capacity. After the divorce, both couples got second marriage. The children were less priority for the both parents. To get rid from these miseries, they (children) both left their school and either were on the street or off the street. They were wandering around without any productive activity.

I categorize the findings into below themes.

### Parental Dispute in the Exchange Marriage System: Child-Rolling Stone

A person takes revenge either consciously or unconsciously from others in the system of the exchange marriage. Parents unconsciously used their children to tease, heart and victimize each other in order to take revenge from the partner in developing countries under the system of the exchange. Children wanted to live with the both parents. Azhar reported: “I miss a lot to my father when I am with my mother.” However, Munir tells: “I don’t want to live with my father. He is cruel because he divorced my mother. If he was living with my mother, I was happy with him. Now I’m not.” Nevertheless, both of the children were uneasy with the parental quarrel.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are used for the actual names of the respondents in order to secure the privacy.

Children wanted to enjoy the company of their parents. However, they are unable to live together due to the parental problems. One couple was happy to continue their marital relationship. However, the second couple was not happy. The revenge taking is common in the exchange marriage system whatever the cost the couples have to pay. A male respondent justified his action:

(...) revenge taking is necessary in this system. (...) My family compelled me to take revenge (...) to take revenge is the right of a person. If my sister is being treated badly, I have the right to protect her. It is appropriate for me to send my wife back to her parental home as my sister is being treated badly. It isn't about revenge but taking care of my sister (...). My sister is my honour and has more right as compare to my children.

Consequently, children become victim of the revenge. In such a situation of the exchange marriage, children are rolling stone due enmity of the parents. Although parents are also in trouble, but children were more victim as compare to their parents. Children are rolling stone of the negative reciprocity as per rule of the system of the exchange.

### **Child Custody Problem in the Exchange Marriage: Children as a Commodity**

Children are often taken as a commodity in the hands of the parents or the state, but they are less considering as an independent identity in developing countries. Parents believe that their children are their resource. The children could be live in their custody like a property. Mother believes she has more right, while father believe that children are his right being a household head in the system of the exchange.

Asghar a male respondent says:

Look! We are living in this village where I have more right on my children as compare to my ex-wife. She should understand that my children are my own. I am custodian of my children. It is my right to direct, control and cares the children and ask them what to do or what not to do. Who is my ex- wife to dictate me? (...).

However, Saban, a divorced lady and Asghar wife has conflict of children custody with her husband Asghar. She says that her husband does not care to her children properly and he has no right of custody. He only accuses them because after divorce he cannot do anything with me directly and he punish my children symbolically.

Children remain under the strict, undue control or they are neglected as being individual. The word "minor" denotes that a child has less value in the human market. The children identity is not solely related to as individual identity rather the identity of their elder. They are victim of the collective responsibility. For instance, girls are given as compensation or exchange to the family of a deceased person in order to escape from any sentence or settle any dispute (Tapper, 1991). Additionally, children are kept away about the choice of future selection in the developing countries where it is responsibility of the parents. A child is exchanged in the marriage market like a commodity. Second case history further highlights above argument.

Zulfiqar, a 13 year-old boy is a son of Aslam an 57-year-old man, who could not read or write and is married to Sabi, a 42 year woman (illiterate) on the basis of the exchange.

Aslam and Sabi have 2 sons (one deaf and the other drug addicted) and three daughters. Aslam has disagreement with his wife to arrange the marriage of his children on the basis of the exchange. Aslam wanted his elder daughter and son's marriage should be arranged with his nephews and niece on the basis of exchange- that he already announced even before his own marriage. He is morally bound to fulfill the commitment with his brother's family. However, his wife wanted that the marriage should be arranged with her nephews and niece. Meanwhile, the children do not like either, but they were without any 'say'. Sabi argued:

It isn't fair to exchange my children with my husband's nephew. Look! I'm not against this system, but this matching isn't fair. Kalsoom (her daughter) is B.Sc (Bachelor of Science). He is illiterate. She is younger than him. My daughter is civilized than him. That's the problem for me. I want an equal match.

Kalsom, a 28 year-old daughter does not like her engagement with her cousin (a 42 year-old man) that was decided in her childhood, even before her birth. She reported:

I received an education with other boys and girls who have different backgrounds from mine. I learnt how to behave and interact, while my spouse is unaware of these things. (...) He lives in a village, but I lived in a city. I don't like his traditional behaviour. (...) My engagement was finalized in childhood on the basis of exchange, but I have gone against it. My friends joke about me and my exchange engagement.

Her mother defended her daughter, but her father wanted to continue this relationship. Owing to this, there was always fighting between them. They accuse each other. Zulfiqar reported: "I was fed up from this continuous quarrel within his family and I started taking pills of addiction. I realized that I could not live without pills and then started heroin. So I became a drug addicted." One of his sisters became ill and other got headache. The couple blamed each other for the responsibility.

The system and the condition of the marriage brought the children to become vulnerable. Parents control and the choice of the marriage brought difficulty of life to the children. However, parents were unaware about the trouble of the system of the exchange.

### **Child Engagement/Marriage in the Exchange System: Social Problem**

In the exchange marriage system, children are engaged soon after their birth or even in some cases before of the birth. Upon their maturity, some of them disagree, but the elders of their family do not allow them to deviate. A female respondent reported:

When my mother got pregnant, my paternal uncle demanded, if the child was a girl, my parents should give her to my uncle's son, in exchange of my mother, as my father already promised on the eve of his own wedding. My parents agreed to this arrangement. Soon after my birth, my paternal uncle gave a gift as confirmation of my future marriage to his son. One year later, my mother delivered a son (my brother) and in exchange, my parents demanded my expected sister-in-law, as my brother's future wife, in exchange of me. My father-in-law did not object, and agreed to the proposal. Thus, my brother and I experienced exchange marriages with paternal cousins.

The children cannot deny this kind of exchanged marriage as per the custom. It is the matter of honour especially in case of women to denounce the marriage (Hussain, 2005). They take it as a matter of honour of the family and disobedience to the children. However, there might be relaxation, if it is the case of a boy. Disobedience is close to the deviancy in this cultural context. Ultimately, they are forced to accept the marriage that breeds violence.

### **Domestic Conflict and Violence on Children: Indirect Reciprocity**

Conflict is important element of the exchange marriage system. If husband or wife is angry with each other, which is common and above data reflect this evidences. Some of the previous studies also mentioned some of the aspects of the domestic conflicts (see Versa-Sanso, 1999). For instance husband may angrily deal and beat his wife. A couple also beat, harm and taunt to their children in order to show the anger to the partner (Zaman, 2009). Especially a woman takes lead to give bad names to her husband because she cannot beat her husband physically in this cultural context. A man may beat a wife, but if a wife does the same, it brings further troubles for her. His husband will harm more than her husband. However, she shows her anger to her husband by beating her own children.

The enmity between couple brings indirect reciprocity of violence to the children. They abuse their children to show the anger to the partner. The children, without any reason, are the victim of this negative reciprocity due to the system of the exchange. For instance, Azhar, a boy tells:

Whenever there is quarrel between my parents, my mother punished me. One day she slapped on me (...). I was depressed. I escape to my aunt's house. My father knew about this and he was angry with my mother. (...) I think, my parents do not care about me but they fight with each other.

### **Conjugal Conflict and Child Drug Addiction: Obscure Deviancy**

Conjugal conflicts may bring drug addiction among children. Drug addiction seems a pattern among children is emerging to get rid from domestic conflicts. They get involved in a deviant peer group. Such cases of the child's drug addiction were increasing and the exchange marriage was obvious reason in my study. Conjugal conflicts create a space for child deviancy and delinquency.

A third case history is further depicting the scenario where children's development is obstructed. Mazhar is a 16 year-old boy living with her mother Zaiveri, a 42 year-old married to her cousin Bashir, a 47 year-old man. They were married on the basis of the exchange. Zaiveri's brother and exchanged sister-in-law do not have children. However, Mazhar's parents were separated due to the exchange marriage trouble after 2 years of his birth. However, they did not divorce to each other due to the stigma of divorce. Mazhar mother was without earning with whom he was living. He thought to support her mother financially at the age of 14. He started a labor in a local factory and left his school. Soon after, he was not adjusted in the labor market due to exploitation and less earnings. He became a vendor in his childhood, but did not succeed to earn sufficient money. Owing to his failure, one day he stole his uncle's purse, but escaped to be blamed. "I was hungry and my mother has nothing to give me. I went to my uncle's home and found his purse in the cupboard. I stole it and did not tell him due to fear". He did again the theft in someone else's home from neighborhood in order to fulfill his expenditures. Gradually, he was getting confident. He reported me: "I didn't find any alternative. No job, no money and nothing to live. (...) Nobody was willing to agree to give their daughter to marry me in such a scenario." Last year, he raped a girl of his age from



cousins. After this act, he was captured. The relatives of the girl punished him. He was beaten not only from the girl's family, but also his father punished him.

### **Broken homes: Delinquency**

Paternal social control maintains the child behaviour in order to become a productive citizen. In the exchange system, the chances of broken homes are higher. Owing to this, children become ambivalent that leads to delinquency. In Mazhar's case history, he was encouraged by his mother to earn some money to live by whatever he means use for it. On the other hand, his father was not able to support him and neglect the child. Thus, this boy became a delinquent and then criminal in this scenario. In two other reported cases during my fieldwork, one child whose parents divorced and could not look after him was kidnapped. Another child took poison and committed suicide because of his parents' marital conflicts that were motivated due to the marriage exchange system.

Sociological knowledge emphasize that criminality is a learn behaviour which emerge from the social conditions and given social environment. Social condition paved his way to become a member of a criminal peer group. One can count many other reasons of a criminal behavior of the child.

### **Poverty and Child Labor: Insecurity**

Poverty brings child labor. Children realize economic burden and try to overcome it. Some of the children fall in a vicious cycle or trap of child labor. They try to find a way out in order to overcome their socio- economic needs. Owing to the unavailability of the social security system in Pakistan, children are vulnerable to earn money for their own or family livelihood. If they do not find any legitimate means, they are compelled to adopt the illegal sources to maintain their livings. The children try to earn money and feed their family in some cases. They have to leave their education and become child laborer. They work in unhealthy conditions. This kind of situation may merge in other situations of broken homes; however, in Pakistan under the system of exchange in my sample, it has consequences for the two families- two pairs of couples, their respective families and sometimes problems within the kinship.

For instance, Rahim, a male got separated from his wife Azhara due to his sister's problem with her husband Alim because their marriage was on exchange. He has a child Samir, a 12-years old boy. Samir spent some days with his father after his parents divorced each other but then he went to his mother's house for three years. He could not maintain his schooling there due to poverty and left the school. His mother demanded money from Samir's father to look after him who was unable to afford. His mother was also without any income. Therefore, Azhara asked her son Samir to earn some money for living. Initially, Samir was irritated to earn money. On her mother's demand, he started earning some money in a nearby factory at the age of 15. Finally, he found that he could earn easily if he starts pickpocketing. Thus, he became a member of the pickpocketing group. His father came to know his activities. He punished Samir who ran away to city. In the city, he started his own group of pickpocketing. One day he was caught there and police arrested him. His parents, relatives and everyone paid to his stolen money to the concerned person while taking some debt and he was released from the police on bail.

Consequently, children are insecure in the system of the exchange marriage. They are vulnerable for their livelihood, if their parents live apart or they do not care of them. State is not taking responsibility to look after the children. Although the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, article 35, gives right of the protection of the family and children, yet in practice, the state

does not provide any shelter to the vulnerable children or families. Even the families and children are unaware about their rights. Nonetheless, children remain on the edge of insecurity in the system of the exchange as compare to the modern marriage system.

### **Exchange Marriage as a Mechanism of Welfare: A Dilemma of Security or Insecurity**

The marriage exchange system is defined as a system of welfare in Pakistan (Jacoby & Mansuri, 2008). It is perceived a system that creates alliances and binds the people together (Lévi-Strauss, 1969). The marriage exchange system has some aspects which strengthen the welfare and social security of the families involved in the exchange. For instance, Aslam reported:

Although one of my sons is deaf and dumb and the other is a drug addict. (...) they still are my *khoo*n (blood means here relatives) and they have an equal right to marry in exchange of my daughters. (...) My brother is ready to exchange this daughters in exchange of mine (...) My brother believes that at least my sons are his blood and his *kuf* (lineage) and he is ready to give his daughters to my sons in exchange. (...) My brother is ready to exchange his daughter with my daughter for my disabled son's marriage. (...) Why shouldn't prefer him, since he has already given my *watta* (exchange), and secondly he is willing to give his daughter to my disabled son? (...) My brother said if he is handicapped, it is not a problem, they are his *khoo*n (blood) and he will take care of them.

Further he assures: "my daughters take care of my brother properly, and better than any other woman from outside our *biradari* (clan)." Another male respondent reported:

Exchange marriages are the protection of a stable family and marriage of a person and his/her children. They maintain the safety and stability of the marriage. A man definitely thinks about his exchanged sister if he tries to harm his wife. His sister also will be treated in the same way. So in the tradition of exchange marriages, many people willingly or unwillingly agree to a compromise, in order to lead a balanced life, so that the two families do not have to deal with disturbances.

However, this system brings difficulties for the children which are clear in this study. In case of conflict, less attention is given to the protection of the children in the system of the exchange marriage. The care and look after of the children is decreasing among the couples of the exchange marriage. Despite of the fact that parents were conscious about the care and security of children, still they neglected them after getting the right and recognition. Security of the children seems obscured in the system. A male respondent pointed out:

There isn't a single positive aspect to the system of the exchange. It is full of harm and difficulties especially for children. An innocent woman (*and off course children*) has to bear serious consequences due to the marriages through no fault of her own but rather someone else. (...). I am sad to think that in this modern age, we are still acting in this negative manner.

A female respondent reported:

In our family, a man keenly plays the role of brother or son properly, but not that of a father. He always defends his parents', sisters' and brothers' interests. (...) He doesn't care for his wife or children as he does for the rest of his family. If he does, he is blamed for being *behaya* (shameless) or *runmureed* (servant of the wife). (...) Mostly elderly women are responsible for the emergence of such disputes. (...) It is not good.

From the data, it is visible that the notion of security and welfare of the children and family is not sole purpose of the system of the exchange marriage. It brings a lot of social problems as well. This system of the exchange is tit for tat in its inherited nature in Pakistan. If a spouse gives any positive thing or relationship to the other, the second is bond to reciprocate either in positively. This relationship brings positive reciprocity. However, in case of negative relationship, there is cycle of negative reciprocity. In case of denial, the person has to feel social pressure to response adequately. Positive and negative reciprocity are integral part of the exchange system. In my data, negative consequences are visible and especially, the children are not exception from these negative outcomes.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Marriage exchange system has been theorized as a system of welfare and wellbeing (Jacoby & Mansuri, 2008). However, the system inherits the insecurity as well. Children are recipient of the insecurity in the system. They treated like a commodity to be exchanged. They become the victim of the exchange in developing countries like Pakistan.

Children suffer due to domestic problems and become the symbol of parental enmity in case of conflict or divorce. The children find themselves at the centre of the conflict between their parents. They do not receive proper socialization. Children are vulnerable and likely to fall into delinquency and risk their education. This vulnerability of the children makes them deviant and they get involved in anti-social behaviour. This affects a child's health, mental capacity and the development of personality (Niaz, 2004; Zaman, 2009, 2010).

Sociological and anthropological literature on the subject does not take into account the exchange system in Pakistan which has reciprocal system of "tit for tat" or "chain reaction" of positive or negative reciprocity. Children, under this system, become vulnerable. Therefore, current literature on the subject needs re-theorizing and reconsideration.

This paper highlights the domestic feuds due to the exchange marriage system in Pakistan. The system of the exchange marriage is among the illiterate or less educated community who follow the traditional system. They have less awareness about the international conventions of the human rights. However, these feuds could happen in other traditional or even modern marriage system. An educated couple might have similar problem that may be a consciously or unconsciously among the children of the modern marriage. However, it might be limited to the children of single couple. In the exchange system, the second couple and their children are also venerable which not the case of modern marriages is. Nevertheless this study gives an empirical example from a control mate selection, insecurity and its affect on children.

## References

- Bearman, P. (1997). Generalized exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(5), 1383-1425.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Outline a theory of practice* (Trans. by Richard Nice). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 19 (6): 418-427.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (2002/1965). Discovery of substantive theory: A basic strategy underlying qualitative research. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 8(6), 5-11.
- Hussain, Y. (2005). *Writing diaspora: South Asian women, culture and ethnicity*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Jacoby, H. G., & Mansuri, G. (2008). *Watta Satta: Bride exchange and women's welfare in rural Pakistan*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969). *The elementary structures of kinship*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Molloy, M. (1986). "No inclination to mix with strangers": Marriage patterns with highland Scot migrants to Cape Breton and New Zealand, 1800-1916. *Journal of Family History*, 11(3), 221-243.
- Niaz, U. (2004). Women's mental health in Pakistan. *World Psychiatry*, 3(1), 60-62.
- Schweizer, T., & White, D. R. (1998). Emergence, development, and transformation of kin-based exchange systems. In T. Schweizer & D. R. White (Eds.), *Kinship, networks and exchange* (pp. 245-250), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Strathern, M. (1984). Marriage exchanges: Melanesian comment. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13, 41-74.
- Tapper, N. (1991). *Bartered brides: Politics gender and marriages in Afghanistan tribal society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Versa-Sanso, P. (1999). Dominant daughters-in-law and submissive mother-in-law? Cooperation and conflict in South India. *MAN*, 5(4), 577-593.
- Zaman, M. (2008). Socio-cultural security, emotions and exchange marriages in a community. *South Asia Research*, 28(3), 285-298.
- Zaman, M. (2009). *Exchange marriages in the community of Kabirwala, Pakistan: A sociological analysis of kinship structure, agency, and symbolic culture*. A PhD Dissertation submitted at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences. Leipzig University: Leipzig, Germany
- Zaman, M. (2010). Marriage of cousins: Congenital diseases and people's perception in Pakistan, a public health challenge. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 31(3), 381-383.
- Zaman, M., & Wohlrab-Sahr, M. (2010). Obstructed individualization and social anomie: Marriage relations in rural Pakistan and their relevance for an empirically grounded theory of individualization conflicts. In P. A. Berger & R. Hitzler (Eds.), *Individualisierungen. Ein Vierteljahrhundert jenseits von Stand und Klasse* (pp 155-176). Wiesbaden: VS.
- Zaman, M. (2011). Methodological gravitism. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(6), 1574-1598. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR16-6/zaman.pdf>

## Author Note

Muhammad Zaman is teaching and researching at the Department of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be reached by email at [zaman@qau.edu.pk](mailto:zaman@qau.edu.pk).

Copyright 2013: Muhammad Zaman and Nova Southeastern University.

**Article Citation**

Zaman, M. (2013). Impact of exchange marriage on children in Pakistan: Social security or insecurity? *The Qualitative Report*, 18(Art. 46), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/zaman46.pdf>

---