

## An Analysis of Perception Regarding Bride Price in Jacobabad City, Sindh

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### ABSTRACT

*Bride price is a term that refers to a payment made by groom or groom's family to bride's family. In current research, the researcher is trying to analyze the perception of community regarding bride price issues in Jacobabad. The people of Jacobabad are traditional people and this practice is surviving here. Sample consisted on 110 male through purposive sampling method technique. The result shows that 100% respondents admitted that practice of bride price is available in Jacobabad district. 8% respondents believe that this practice is beneficial for both families and 17% respondents believe that this practice is not decreasing. 9% respondents believe that bride price practice is safeguard for women to protect her from violence against women. 55% respondents identify gold as a mode of payment for bride price.*

**Keywords:** Bride Price, Community, General Perception, Jacobabad, Sindh

### INTRODUCTION

Bride price is a common mutually agreed traditional practice in Jacobabad. It is an act to validate the customary marriages. The communities where this practice is common, people believe that this practice stabilizes the relationship of bride & groom, protects the bride from violence and develops the better partnership between both the families. Bride price is a contract, in which material items (cattle, land, house, animals etc) or money are paid by groom or his family in exchange of bride, her labor or her capacity to produce children (Oguli, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. Bride-Price is the mixture of two words, Bride means a "Women & Price means "Payment. The payment groom pays to bride's family<sup>2</sup>. Strathern (1972)<sup>3</sup> describes it as "Bride Wealth". The gifts that groom presents to bride are termed by people as wealth. While Lea (1976)<sup>4</sup> calls it "Marriage Payment", and this is actual payment to buy bride for marriage. Although bride price practices are cultural norms of some communities but it is not common in all communities of Jacobabad. Due to different ethnic, tribal groups and different culture & traditions. Now days, this practice appears as a commercial exercise and has lost much of its traditional benefits. It appears now to buy a "wife" as a product or comparing the value of a woman to the amount of bride price paid. Bride price is a well-known method of payment to bride. But there are many other interpretations that exist. In some tribes, it is public act to show the validation of marriage and open new ties between relatives and couples<sup>5</sup>. While some people think that bride price is an act to empower the bride because she lost her own clan. Bride price is a human rights issue and may cause of spread of domestic violence against women. In bride price issue money is motivation factor for marriage. Power full or rich people can marry with any girl/women they desire. Poor or intellectual people have less choice to marry with their own choice. Therefore the element of love is not considered in this practice and money is key factor. The people of Jacobabad are traditional people and bride price practice is surviving in some tribes. Although due to awareness the rate of this practice is decreasing but still it is alive.

## **ANCIENT HISTORY OF BRIDE PRICE**

Quale (1988)<sup>6</sup> argues that bride price used to exist in 3000 B.C. in ancient civilization of Egyptian, Hebrews, Aztecs and Mesopotamians. This practice of bride price was common in the countries, which were under the Ottoman Empires especially in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Albania and Afghanistan (Rapoport, 2000)<sup>7</sup>. Hughes (1985)<sup>8</sup> shares that in Germanic tribes who ruled Western Europe from 600 to 1000 CE, bride price was essential to legalize the marriage.

### **Locale**

General John Jacob was the founder of Jacobabad in 1847. Before this name it was known as a small village “Khan Ghar”. The total area of district is 5,278 square Kilometers<sup>9</sup>. According to social welfare department 2007, total population of district is 941,436 of which 17.03 % are urban. Sindhi, Balouch, Pathan, Urdu speaking & Punjabi are main Muslim communities. 93 % people are Muslims. Only 06 % of total population is Hindu & Christian and they are settled in urban areas<sup>10</sup>.

## **OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

The research was conducted to find out the existence of bride price practice in society. The specific objectives are as under:

1. To analyze the community perception and views regarding bride price.
2. To find out the factors related to bride price practice.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this exploratory study the researchers sought to better understand the perception of respondents regarding bride price. Therefore 110 respondents through purposive sampling method were selected and all respondents were male. The respondents belonged to different occupations like lawyer, teachers, from judiciary, NGOs, media and health profession. The respondents belong to 25 – 45 years age group.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The table 1 is showing the perception and belief of respondents regarding bride price practice. The results are indicating that all 100% respondents are aware regarding bride price practice. Furthermore this result indicates that bride price practice is common in Jacobabad. 72 % participants have participated in those marriages that were based on bride price practice. While 28 % respondents identify the problem but have not participated in any such marriage. 92% respondents believed that these marriages are not beneficial for brides as well as their families. Majority of the respondents 38% believed that this practice was common in poor families while perception of 30% respondents said that, “this practice is common in uneducated families”. While 24% respondents believed that this practice has existence in rich families and 8% respondents believed that this practice is common in all, poor, rich & uneducated families. 83% respondents believe that due to education this practice is decreasing. 91% respondents believe that this practice is not safe guard for bride to protect her from domestic violence. But 9% respondents believe that this practice is safe guard for women. In our traditional community women have limited control on their bodies either sexually or in shape of labor.

Therefore this tradition cannot be safeguard for women. Wendo (2004)<sup>11</sup> defines that bride price is a payment for sexual rights and it leads to women loss in both sexual protection and frequency of sexual intercourse. Moreover women cannot decide to use contraceptive as her

own will. 55% respondents believe that gold is mode of payment for bride. While 39% believe that cash, 4% cattle's and only 02% identified house as mode of payment for bride. High bride price may increase the extramarital affairs of men (Bishai and Grossbard 2006)<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 1**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>(N= 110) Percentage</i>
Is bride Price practice available in different communities of Jacobabad?	Yes	100
	No	0
Did you participate in any marriage based on bride price?	Yes	72
	No	28
From you point of view bride price practice is beneficial for both families?	Yes	8
	No	92
In which families' bride price practice is common?	Poor	38
	Rich	24
	Un educated	30
	All above	8
Is this practice decreasing due to education or not?	Yes	83
	No	17
Causes of bride price practice are	Poverty	59
	Tradition	32
	Influence of other communities	9
Is bride price preventing women from domestic abuse?	Yes	9
	No	91
What is the mode of payment?	Gold	55
	House	2
	Cattles	4
	Cash	39

Source: Primary Data

## CONCLUSION

The bride price practice is existing in Jacobabad district, although it is decreasing due to awareness and education. It is violation of women rights especially right to marry, but very little 9% respondents don't recognize it as a serious issue. This practice may be eliminated through community awareness programs and up lifting the standard of living of people of society. Community sensitization can also play a major role in this regard.

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