



**THE UNSEEN GRIEF OF RUKHSATI:
EMOTIONAL TRANSITION AND CULTURAL MEANING - MAKING IN PAKISTANI
MARITAL CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

Rukhsati, a part of Pakistani weddings is a major change for a woman's life. It is the moment when a woman leaves her own home and stepping into new life with husband and in-laws. Although, it is often a time of happiness and excitement but this change also has deep emotional meanings that are not always talked about. Women often feel sad, anxious, separated and uncertain about their role along with being happy. This study tries to understand what women go through during rukhsati focusing on their emotions and how they make sense of this change. The study includes in-depth interviews with 16 women who have gone through rukhsati. Their stories were analyzed through thematic analysis to find emotions and meanings. The findings show that rukhsati is a mixed-emotional experience. Many women described it as a moment where happiness and sadness exist together. They felt happy about starting a life but also felt a strong sense of loss from leaving their parents, own home and familiar environment. Those feelings were seldom conveyed in an



explicit manner: Women are supposed to be tough and to take their duty. The study also shows that women try to cope with these emotions by giving meaning to their experience. Many women saw rukhsati as a cultural and spiritual step, facilitating their acceptance towards the change and compromise and adapt to their new existence. However, the pressure to meet expectations sometimes led to emotional suppression and causes inner conflict. In conclusion rukhsati is not a cultural tradition but also a deep emotional and psychological experience. It involves elements of loss, adjustment and reshaping one's identity. By sharing women's experiences, this study brings focus to the hidden emotional sides of rukhsati and emphasizes the need for more understanding and emotional support during this transition of woman's life.

Keywords: *Rukhsati, Life-transition, Hidden emotions, Cultural expectations Emotional suppression.*

Introduction

Every Pakistani wedding ends with the scene; a home decorated with flowers and lights, music playing, and a daughter stepping out of her parent's home while everyone around her celebrates. But behind the Congratulations, there is actually a silence that rarely gets named; Rukhsati. While, in many societies, weddings are perceived as occasions of pure happiness, in Pakistan, the tradition of rukhsati requires a critical scrutiny. Whereas rukhsati may appear to be celebrated as a public ceremony of saying goodbye to the bride as she enters a new phase in her life, such perception of the occasion hides another dimension that is constructed around feelings of loss, estrangement, and negotiation of emotionality. The purpose of this research is to uncover the affective dynamics that operate in rukhsati practice.

Rukhsati, a word originating from Urdu meaning "departure" or "departure ritual", refers to the point in time at which a bride leaves her own family home in order to move into the house of her husband. Despite the symbolic meaning attached to the process, the act also signifies an actual physical and psychological shift that a woman undergoes with respect to her place of belonging and self-identity. The former home will no longer be seen as significant, whereas the latter home will continue to be foreign for quite some time. This will concern us with the notion of Turner (1969) has talked about liminality. But, liminality is not just temporary. In the context of rukhsati, it has the potential of being permanent.

SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The feeling in rukhsati has not been a coincidence from the socio-cultural perspective But, have been socialized over an extended period of time on a gender basis. In Pakistani culture girls' attire is a vital aspect of their identity. Often, have been referred to as temporary members of their biological families as in: the saying paraya - dhan. These discourses encourage the notion of going away from home, but at the same time minimize the emotional ramifications involved. Feminist studies paint a different picture, however, as feminist researchers would argue that such accounts are not neutral but are used to strengthen the patriarchy kinship system. In this regard, women seem natural (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Kandiyoti, 1988). As a result, the psychological strain.



This process has been comparatively neglected as far as its association with is concerned. Tears are okay and even regulated in the ritual of rukhsati. Crying is considered the act is only encouraged at a certain time and is organized in a certain way culturally. Its ritual performance. Once the ritual is over the emotional script is on adjustment, thankfulness, and obedience. This is in keeping with the theory of emotional labor. According, to the process of controlling one's emotions in accordance with the society's norms, it is called Hochschild (1983), the process of controlling one's emotion norms. Not only do brides have to possess some feelings, but they should likewise show socially approved feelings, sometimes even contrary to their own feelings of grief.

In this method the sadness of rukhsati is an example of the experience of disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1989), a form of loss that is not recognized by society. Unlike when we deal with bereavement, a social support system exists in the shape of rituals and recognition, the emotional loss in bereavement. The case of rukhsati is, in this case, hidden from others. Psychological research in the present day has shown that such grief can make someone feel worse emotionally because it can cause them to bottle up their feelings and have them last longer. From the literature, we can infer that adaptation difficulties (Lenferink et al., 2021) also exist. The social context is a problem complication that supports marriage as it is a good experience.

Ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999) is another term similar to the phenomenon under discussion. This idea refers to the complicated experience of loss in situations when people cannot close the chapter by finding definite answers. In the case of rukhsati, the girl does not literally lose her family; nevertheless, she loses the nature of their interaction. She stops being physically present at home and continues being psychologically attached to it, forming the condition of ambiguous attachment. Researches note that it is especially hard for people to cope with ambiguous loss because it is poorly recognized socially and conceptually (Boss, 2021; MDPI Healthcare, 2024). Considering that family ties are the key aspect for building personal identity in Pakistan, this factor may complicate this process.

The recent research in South Asian settings emphasizes the extent to which women's emotional life is influenced by cultural norms of resilience and sacrifice. Based on research carried out from 2021 to 2025, it appears that women experience emotional repression as a consequence of lack of space to vent their emotions and the fear of being criticized by others (BMC Women's Health, 2022; BMC Public Health, 2025). This means that rukhsati could be seen not just as a transitional event but as an emotional suppression ritual as well.

IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION

Transformation of identity is an inseparable part of rukhsati and is very important in other socio-cultural talks. Indeed, it is well known that identity is a fluid entity, which changes over time depending on interactions, expectations, and adaptability of the person. Thus, as an aspect of becoming a daughter-in-law, rukhsati is an initiation into new social roles. These roles, in turn, entail certain behavioral and attitudinal expectations from a new wife, including her sense of belonging and responsibilities toward the in-law family. Overall, this means that rukhsati becomes a part of a larger transformation process that is related to the reconstruction of identity.



EMOTIONAL BURNOUT AND THE INEQUALITY OF CARE

The situation becomes even more complex because of the uneven distribution of social and emotional duties in terms of marital structures. Although marriage is usually described as the union of two individuals, the reality of many Pakistani marriages is the absorption of the wife into the existing family structure. The process of becoming part of a family is not without its hierarchies and pre-established patterns. In other words, it is a difficult process of adaptation to the already established social structures where negotiation takes place. Therefore, the emotional consequences of the ceremony of rukhsati not only stem from the separation from the maternal family, but also from the necessity of adjustment to the new social conditions.

In analyzing such dynamics, it is quite clear that the emotions associated with rukhsati also have a close connection with issues related to the concept of belonging. This is because to feel like a part of something is more than being physically there; it's about feeling, acceptance and recognition. A lot of brides experience an event of the loss of their belongingness. In an old setting, without obtaining any kind of belonging in the new setting. At a certain point, the process results in partial belonging (some belonging, some not) in which one feels belonging, but is not belonging to the same time, in various environments.

Moreover, the impact of silence on these emotions is noteworthy. Marriage cultures tend to be risky and could lead to a rise in negative feelings, which would be detrimental to any open discussion go against the values of creating family harmony. This results to sadness, anxiety or feelings of being miserable. Loss may not have to be manifested in an outward manner. Such silence is not just a lack as this is not about the ability to articulate emotions but socialized and has implications for understanding and managing one's emotions. It helps to make grief invisible and yet makes it socially acceptable.

Under such circumstances it is important that we raise some questions about the connections between Culture and Expression of emotions. The customs that we see in culture are not just reflections but they are not the source of our emotions, but rather help to form our feelings, how we express them and how we perceive them. The rituals then have a dual function: the first that of expression, and the second that of regulation. Feeling, for example that within the set limits of time, of controlled grief can be expressed.

PERFORMATIVE RITUAL

Pakistani weddings are pompous events that are conducted in public, where everyone in the family and social circle is present, network is present. In such a climate, feelings are revealed and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For instance, when a bride screams, it is a form of expressing her feelings and a statement to discuss her feelings of belonging with society, her childhood and her relationship with the family members. However, the performative nature of this emotions raises the question of how much of this emotion is sincere and how much there is done in line with cultural norms.

In the recent past, there has been much focus on how social transformation is bringing about changes in some of the customs. Issues like urbanization, education, and globalization have



brought about new methods of interaction and mobility, perhaps changing what was known before in terms of the pain of being away in rukhsati. Bride brides in this day and age are able to communicate much more easily with members of their native families, perhaps visit them more often, and even continue working outside of the house. However, though this may ease some of the losses involved, it does not make the process easy.

It should be emphasized that these changes reflect another generation gap, since younger women, especially those who have been educated in different societies, will probably have their own visions concerning rukhsati and its meaning in relation to marriage and gender identity. At the same time, it does not mean that these visions are not affected by the traditional norms that continue being relevant to families and individuals living in the modern Indian society. On the contrary, this contradiction makes the process even more complicated emotionally.

Nevertheless, one cannot neglect the idea that rukhsati experiences are far from being homogeneous. In fact, such issues as social and economic status of individuals, region, education, family structure, and others play an essential role in the way the transition takes place. Thus, the perceptions of young women in an urban context and nuclear families could be different rukhsati. Furthermore, economical condition of the bride can be a big determinant for the degree of independence. She enjoys the psychological adjustment in new life.

The encounter of emotion and culture also raises the question of re-evaluating what constitutes grief itself. Grief is most commonly thought to occur in conjunction with an identifiable loss, such as a loss of life. The case of rukhsati demonstrates a challenge to this idea through a form of grief that cannot be classified as either full or easy to categorize. Grief must therefore be understood to be not just about loss but about change – especially when such change undermines one's sense of self or connection to others.

UNSEEN GRIEF OF RUKHSATI

The concept of "unseen grief" is particularly relevant here. As a way of recognizing aspects of grief that may go overlooked, it helps identify emotional phenomena that do not conform to dominant cultural discourses. As such, the current analysis of rukhsati hopes to contribute to current knowledge about the nature of both grief and marriage transition. In doing so, however, it does not assume that cultural traditions are devoid of contradiction and conflict.

The above discussion also has significant implications for how we define support networks. Unless we recognize the influence of rukhsati on women's emotions, there is a high possibility that we will not realize the importance of rukhsati. If it is not recognized that rukhsati affects women's emotions then the chances are great that it will not be understood. This issue will never get enough consideration in any family or social context. In no way will our acknowledging the existence of sadness take away from the happy parts of marriage; instead, it can help us to have a more integrated approach that considering happiness and sadness.

When we combine all the above pieces of the puzzle, we're now able to see we're studying about: points out the importance of rukhsati as a great opportunity to explore the connection between emotions, culture and power. Our examination of the text includes more than just the



literal meaning and concepts, it also explores the profound psychological and social level of transition. Meanwhile, the significance of this study not only does its focus on “rukhsati” but overall, the significance of this research lies its role in the analysis of the cultural influence in the formation of emotions. In this way, the results of the research bring up new questions about the common perceptions and demand further investigation of this issue.

METHODOLOGY

This section explains how we studied the changes and hidden pain that Pakistani women go through when they leave their homes as part of the rukhsati ritual. We wanted to understand what emotions these women experience during rukhsati and how their culture, family expectations and the things that have meaning to them play a role in shaping these emotions. We chose to use a research method because it helps us dig deep into the subject. The study focused on women and their experiences with rukhsati. Rukhsati is an event in a woman’s life and we looked at how it affects her emotions. The cultural background and family expectations of these women are crucial, in understanding their transitions during rukhsati.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is looking at the experiences and cultural meanings of the rukhsati ritual in Pakistani weddings. I think this kind of research is perfect for this study because it helps us understand people feelings and what things mean to them in a detailed way. We can learn about the cultural things that are important to people, which is not something you can measure with

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|-----------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Research Design | ritual, in wedding what it means to | Qualitative Research | ing on and w Phenomenological Approach |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|

Quantitative design allowed participants to explain their personal experiences in their own words, providing insights into emotional response such as grief. Many participants expressed feelings of sadness, silence, emotional and internal conflict, highlighting the deep nature of this transition.

This study follows phenomenological approach which explore and understand individual lived experiences and their meanings. In this study the phenomenon being explored is emotional transition during the ritual of rukhsati, both bride and family experienced grief.

The aim of this research is not to measure grief, but to interpret how grief is experienced, expressed, and shaped by cultural traditions. As John W. Creswell explains, qualitative research is suitable when the aim is to explore individuals’ lived experiences within their social and cultural context. This study will help to explore how the social expectations, cultural traditions and symbolic objects influence the emotional expression of individual during the Pakistani weddings

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

The target populations of this research include 16 women who had experienced rukhsati event within Pakistani culture. Participant was selected on their direct experience of rukhsati and



they were willing to share their personal experiences related to this transition. Participants represented diverse backgrounds, urban and rural population. This difference allowed to explore culture variations in emotional experience which influenced by family structure, culture norms and socio-economic status. Participants shared multiple emotional responses during the rukhsati, including grief, attachment to parental home and fear of stranger or unknown. Some women shared sense of loss while leaving familiar environment, while others expressed emotional adjustment over time. This study highlighted the complex emotional nature of rukhsati and its long-term psychological impact.

SAMPLING

This research uses purposive sampling, where participants are selected based on their relevance to the research topic. It was used to select the participants that fit certain aspects of inclusion depending on research objectives. The married, happy married, unhappy married and divorced brides was chosen because they have experienced that event and emotional experience. According to Michael Quinn Patton, purposive sampling is effective when the researcher wants to gain in-depth understanding from individuals with specific experiences. Women were selected because they had personally experienced rukhsati and could provide insights into emotional and cultural dimensions. Selection criteria ensured that participants lived experienced directly and relevant to research objectives. Purposive sampling was relevant for this study because the research focused on exploring experience rather than generating numerical data. Participants were approached through community connections and referrals. This allowed trust and encouraged participants to share their emotional experience related to rukhsati openly. Sample size of this study consisted on 16 participants, which is adequate for phenomenological

Research. Phenomenological approach involves smaller size to allow in depth exploration of individual experiences, which is considered appropriate in qualitative research.

Operational definitions

Key terms used in this study are;

Rukhsati:

A traditional Pakistani wedding ritual in which the bride leaves her parent's home to begin new life with her husband in his home.

Unseen Grief:

Emotional pain or transition a bride feels but not always openly expressed due to cultural expectations.

Material Culture:

Physical objects (e.g., bridal dress, dowry items, gifts) that carry cultural and emotional meanings.

Emotional Transition:

The psychological shift experienced during major life changes, such as moving from one family system to another.



DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The primary tool of data collection is a semi-structured in-depth interview, this will allow participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions and interpretations related to rukhsati while maintaining focus. This method is supported by Irving Seidman, who said that interviews help to explore lived experiences in detail. Semi structured in depth interview used in qualitative research because they allow participants to express and share their experience. Semi structured interviews was suitable for exploring emotional experiences related to rukhsati, as it provide flexibility for participants to share emotions and cultural interpretations in their own words.

Interview guide included open ended questions designed to explore and find;

- Emotional experience during the rukhsati rituals.
- Feelings related to leaving the parent's home.
- Cultural expectations related to marriage.
- Emotional coping strategies.
- Symbolic meaning related to rukhsati.
- Adjustment to marital household.
- Role of family expectations and society norms.

Participants expressed variety of emotional responses during the interview, including sadness, fear of unfamiliar environment, leaving parental home and feelings of responsibility towards marital families. Some participants expressed suppressing of emotions due to societal expectations, shows how cultural norms influenced emotional expression.

MATERIAL CULTURE ANALYSIS

Material objects related to rukhsati was analyzed, objects such as:

Bridal dress, Jewelry, Dowry items, Gift exchanged among families, Wedding photos.

They are important because they show cultural values, emotional attachments with transition from one family to another.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Participants were contacted through personal networks using purposive sampling. Participants were respectfully approached and provided with information regarding the purpose of study. Researcher explained the significance of exploring emotional transition and unseen grief related to rukhsati. Informed consent was obtained. Participant were provided with information related to study and researcher explained the purpose of study, confidentiality and duration of study. Interviews were conducted in a comfortable environment in a quiet place ensuring privacy. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 min, allowing participant to freely share the emotional and personal experiences. Participants were encouraged to speak openly about emotions they experienced during rukhsati. The researcher maintained the empathetic and non-judgmental attitude during interviews. Many participants shared emotional moments during interview including feeling of detachment and emotional weight of leaving their parental home. This highlighted the grief associated with rukhsati experiences.



Interviews were audio-recorded (with permission) to ensure the accuracy. Participants were encouraged to speak openly about their experiences, ensured a comfortable environment.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through semi structured interviews were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, as proposed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. Thematic analysis is flexible and will help to identify meanings and emotional themes in participants responses.

Thematic analysis was considered suitable for this study because it allowed researcher to examine the participants emotional and patterns related to grief and emotional transition and cultural expectations and meaning making related to rukhsati.

Participants shared emotionally rich experiences describing feeling of sadness and adaptation during and after the rukhsati. Many expressed silent grieving and difficult expressing distress and emotional withdrawal due to cultural and society expectations reflecting complex nature of emotional transition during rituals if marriage. Thematic analysis supported the exploration of both individual experiences and shared cultural meanings.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The result section describes the findings obtained from the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews and observations, conducted with married women. They were explored using a Phenomenological approach, with emphasis on emotional transitions, identity changes and interpersonal behaviors. The married women were selected by purposive sampling, and 16 women with varying marital duration and marital satisfaction were selected (Table 1). Thematic analysis was used to identify several patterns. The patterns were grouped into themes and subthemes that reflect the common emotional experiences of the participants and the individuality of each participant's story (Table 2).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 16).

| Participant | Age | Education | Occupation | Marital duration | Family System | Type of Marriage | of Marital Satisfaction |
|-------------|-----|------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 30 | F. A | Housewife | 5 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 2 | 29 | F. A | Housewife | 6 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 3 | 27 | F. A | Housewife | 4 years | Joint | Arranged | Confused |
| 4 | 27 | Uneducated | Housewife | 3.5 years | Joint | Arranged | Uncertain |



| Participant | Age | Education | Occupation | Marital duration | Family System | Type of Marriage | of Marital Satisfaction |
|-------------|-----|-----------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 26 | I. COM | Housewife | 3 years | Joint | Arranged | Confused |
| 6 | 31 | F. A | Housewife | 7 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 7 | 28 | F. A | Housewife | 5 years | Joint | Arranged | Confused |
| 8 | 32 | M.A | Housewife | 8 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 9 | 25 | F. Sc | Housewife | 2.5 years | Joint | Arranged | Uncertain |
| 10 | 29 | F. Sc | Housewife | 6 years | Joint | Arranged | Unsure |
| 11 | 27 | F. Sc | Housewife | 4 years | Joint | Arranged | Confused |
| 12 | 30 | Primary | Housewife | 5 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 13 | 28 | Metric | Housewife | 4.5 years | Joint | Arranged | Uncertain |
| 14 | 26 | BS | Housewife | 3 years | Joint | Arranged | Happy |
| 15 | 31 | Middle | Housewife | 7 years | Joint | Arranged | Unhappy |
| 16 | 27 | F. Sc | Housewife | 3.5 years | Joint | Arranged | Confused |

Table 1 represents the demographic characteristics of female participants including age, education, occupation, marital duration, family system, marriage type, and marital satisfaction.

Table 2

A Summarization Qualitative Content Analysis involving Initial Codes, Major Themes and Sub Themes

| Initial codes | Major themes | Subthemes |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Crying after rukhsati. Missing family and close siblings. Emotional lost. | 1. Emotional Separation and Inner Turmoil | 1.1 Grief of leaving own house. 1.2 Emotional overwhelm. 1.3 Fear of new environment |



| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hope for better future. Belief in time for improving matters. Expectations for care and love. Desire for emotional bond with husband. | 2. Hope as an emotional survival | 2.1 Expectations from husband. 2.2 Belief in gradual adjustment. 2.3 Early marital optimism |
| Becoming quiet. Thinking before speaking. Family pressure for adjustment. | 3. Adjustment as Silent Struggle | 3.1 Behavioral modification 3.2 pressure to meet in-laws expectations. 3.3 Suppression of personal desires. |
| Lack of communication No deep conversations Emotional gap | 4. Emotional distance in marriage | 4.1 Limited-communication 4.2 Lack of intimacy Inconsistent-emotional relationship. |
| Feeling alone No one to share feelings Emotional isolation Silence in spouse relationship | 5. Living with loneliness | 5.1 Feeling lonely despite presence of others. 5.2 Lack of emotional support. 5.3 Deep silence. |
| Feeling changed Loss of identity Decreased self-expression | 6. Shifting sense of self | 6.1 Loss of previous identity 6.2 Role-based self-concept 6.3 Reduction in emotional expressions. |



| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Staying busy | 7. Ways of coping and enduring | 7.1 Distraction through daily activities. |
| Voiding thoughts | | 7.2 Emotional suppression. |
| Crying alone | | 7.3 Religious coping (prayer and dua). |
| Not sharing feelings | | |
| Patience | | |

Table 2 presents the Initial codes and seven major themes and further subthemes.

Emotional Separation and Inner Turmoil

Participants reported that rukhsati was a profound emotional and painful experience with a sense of separation from family and inner confusion. Many participants demonstrated that the event was happy and joyful, but on the inside, they were experiencing a lot of anxiety, sadness, grief and stress. One participant commented, “I hugged my mother and felt like something inside me was breaking” (Participant 1), and another, “I was smiling for others, but inside I was crying constantly” (Participant 3). As for the feelings, (Participant 7) commented, “It was like I was being taken away from my own world,” and (Participant 12) said, “I didn't understand my feeling, I just felt heavy and restless.” These responses show that during their departure from parent’s house, it’s not just a simple transition to another house but experienced feelings of loss as they left their own childhood home. Participants' words, like crying, breaking, indicate a great inner turmoil. This theme is a result of a strong emotional struggle between the expectations of being happy, strong, obedient and the reality of sadness, fear and detachment, which is psychologically overwhelming. So, it is evident that when women relocate to husband's home, this move is never going to be easy. It takes time to adjust to a new environment and family and society members need to support them. Emotional support from parents, siblings and from husband plays a key role to overcoming the deep emotional urges.

HOPE AS EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL

Participants used hope as a coping mechanism to deal with emotional pain and to move forward. Hope served as an internal support system that helped them to cope with uncertainty and adapt to their new environment. It indicates that during the transition of women, they also believe in a better life in the future in the new house. For instance, (Participant 2) said, “I told myself that this will get better with time,” and (Participant) said, “I thought maybe this new life will bring something good.” Likewise, (Participant 5) said, “Hope was the only thing that was keeping me calm,” and (Participant 14) commented, “My mother said stay patient, and I just held onto that.” Hope was frequently linked with patience and faith in a better life after death in these statements. But this hope was not always secure, as (Participant 2) also said, “Some days I felt okay, and some days I felt completely empty.” This means that hope was a fragile but important coping



mechanism. It did not take away the emotional pain, but helped participants to endure it and slowly adapt. This way, each participant remains patient only to adapt to the new environment.

ADJUSTMENT AS A SILENT STRUGGLE

Adjustment became a silent and largely unspoken struggle, in which participants were expected to adjust without acknowledging their struggles. Many shared that they experienced emotional difficulties without much support or being asked about their wellbeing. (Participant 6) explained, “No one really asked me how I was adjusting,” and (Participant 11) said, “I used to cry at night and act normal in front of everyone.” Likewise, (Participant 1) said, “You can't complain, you just have to get used to it,” and Participant 8 said, “I didn't say anything when I didn't feel comfortable.” These responses demonstrate that adjustment to new home or place was not a natural or easy process, but rather an emotionally challenging one that was not obvious. Participants' struggles were not openly discussed, as cultural expectations and mother advice for daughters to be patient and obedient discouraged them from expressing their struggles. This emphasis the internalization of emotional difficulties, which made it more isolating.

EMOTIONAL DISTANCE IN MARRIAGE

The participants also indicated emotional distance in their marital relationships, especially in the initial period following marriage. Many reported feeling a lack of familiarity and understanding with their spouse rather than being emotionally close. Participant 10 shared, “We were living together, but we didn't really know each other,” and Participant 8 said, “He didn't know what I was feeling.” Likewise, Participant 2 said, “We didn't discuss emotions at all,” and Participant 12 said, “It was very anxious and lonely.” The above statements imply that emotional bonding is not instantaneous and does not happen after marriage. Communication with spouse and emotional awareness were factors that led to feelings of isolation, more likely inner emptiness, particularly when participants were already experiencing separation from their families. Some participants reported that this was better with time, with the support of their husband, but the emotional distance was more difficult to overcome.

LIVING WITH LONELINESS

Despite being surrounded physically by others in their new homes, a sense of loneliness was apparent in participant's experiences. This loneliness was not physical, but emotional, due to unfamiliarity, lack of comfort and lack of open expression. Participant 7 said, “I was always around people, but I still felt alone,” and Participant 12 said, “I didn't have my home every day.” Likewise, Participant 4 said, “I couldn't speak my mind like I used to,” and Participant 1 said, “I felt like I wasn't there yet.” These responses suggest that participants experienced a feeling of disconnection and lack of belonging when they left their own homes, families and close relationships. They felt even more lonely because they were not able to express themselves openly and they did not have the emotional support they were used to. This theme emphasizes that isolation can still occur when there is no emotional connection in the presence of others.

SHIFTING SENSE OF SELF

Rukhsati also resulted in a significant change in the participants' sense of identity, as they entered into new roles and responsibilities. Many of the participants felt that they were no longer



the same person and had to change themselves to fit into their new environment. Participant 11 said, "I feel like I am not the same person anymore," and Participant 3 said, "I had to change myself to fit in." Likewise, Participant 9 said, "Before, I lived for myself, now I think about everyone else," and Participant 5 said, "I am still trying to understand who I am in this new life." These statements are indicative of a shift from an independent to a more relational identity, in which participants put others before themselves. Some people felt this was a loss of their individuality, others felt it was a part of their personal development. In general, this theme demonstrates that rukhsati is not just a physical change, but also a profound change in one's perception of oneself.

WAYS OF COPING AND ENDURING

Participants described various ways of coping with their emotional struggles, showing their efforts to manage and endure the transition. These coping strategies were patience, emotional control, seeking support and religious practices. Participant 14 shared, "I was silent and took everything as it came, and Participant 12 said, "Prayer brought me peace." Likewise, Participant 6 said, "I talked to my mom a lot, that helped me a lot," and Participant 8 said, "I kept myself busy so I don't overthink." These responses suggest that participants engaged in various ways of coping with their emotions. Some found strength within themselves and acceptance, others found comfort in family or faith. These coping strategies demonstrate resilience, as participants were able to function and adapt despite emotional challenges. This theme demonstrates that the experience was difficult, but not passive, as participants were constantly adapting and finding ways to survive.

CONCLUSION

In this section, the overall conclusions to be drawn from the study "The Unseen Grief Rukhsati" of are presented. The findings of this project are reflected in Rukhsati: Emotional Transition and Cultural Meaning-Making in Pakistani Marital Culture." This was followed by comprehensive recommendations, based on empirical research and theories. The aim of this section is to summarize the main thrust of the research, pick out its arguments, and emphasize all. The emotional needs of children and young people suggested steps to tackle the emotional needs and psychological problems have been diagnosed. This section underscores the critical need to rethink rukhsati in a new way, both in terms of its physical (and psychological) nature and its meaning. As a cultural ritual, as well as a more important emotional transition, it is necessary to have more social support. The recognition of and institutional support for their handicaps.

From the results obtained in this study, it is evident that rukhsati is a profound emotion and psychologically intricacies and much more than its cultural depiction as a happy marital ritual. Grief, anxiety, emotional disengagement and apathy, were common themes across all participants. During and after the event there was a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty. The results are in line with previous studies; signalling significant life changes, especially if the person separated from the main family, were associated with a higher likelihood of being bullied. Major life changes, especially those involving separation from the main family, were linked to increased risk of being bullied. The increased emotional stress (Schlossberg, 1981) is associated with units.



The study also shows that there are a lot of disruptions in the attachment of women bonds, especially with their mothers, that is in line with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1980). This separation causes emotional anguish akin to loss, but is not socially acknowledged as. The UNSEEN GRIEF OF RUKHSATI was the first full-length novel written in Urdu, in 1982. Rather, it is expected that women will be able to repress /or control their emotions as per the norms of cultural expectations, as a part of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983).

In addition, the results indicate that rukhsati starts a process of identity, the role shift of women from daughter to wife and daughter-in-law (ngayai). This shift may involve role conflict, a loss of autonomy and pressures to adhere to changed social norms. The results are consistent with the theories of role (Goode, 1960) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) that describe the experiences of individuals easily stressed at assuming new roles and group memberships.

Symptoms of anxiety and depression due to marital adjustment and family stress (Daraz et al., 2014; Ahmed et al., 2013). Likewise, the data from the World Health Organization (WHO) around the globe problems because they are expected to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbirth. Women in societies with a patriarchal and collectivist society are more at risk for mental health issues regarding their roles as wife and mother, limited autonomy and social expectations (WHO, 2021) are challenges.

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