

**IDEAL AND REAL SPOUSE SELECTION CRITERIA  
AMONG THE YOUTH OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN**



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## ***ABSTRACT***

Spouse selection is recognized around the world as accepted process where individual search for partner. Its purpose is to serve the requirement of matching the women for men and vice versa. This research was conducted with aim to find out ideal and real spouse selection among youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. Selection of ideal mate is confusing process in the life of most people. Social exchange theory and matching hypothesis are supporting ideal and real spouse selection. In both theories, seeking spouse is justified in an ideal way. Both men and women weigh rewards and costs and attract towards those who are as attractive as themselves. Both men and women possess ideal spouse selection. Men idealized physical attractiveness, education and social status of girl. On the other hand, female respondents idealized caring, supportive and honesty. Barrier in spouse selection is sect and no family and caste barrier reported. Both male and female are not fully independent in choosing spouse. In the preferences, economic status while social status of spouse is emphasized by both male and female respondents. Respondents reported that their real spouse do not possess ideal criteria they proposed before marriage.

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## **CHAPTER NO. 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The spouse selection is familiar, recognized and accepted process where every individual search for partner. The process of spouse selection encompasses not just choosing of spouse but also push young people to into desire of selecting spouse. Spouse selection sets the tone for the early adult life style. It determines one's daily routine, including the time one wakes up, ones daily activities expenditures of physical and mental energy. Welten and Lloyd (2000) examined some factors that makes this possible, "foremost among them is the desire to participate in a socially sanctioned, mutually rewarding, intimate relationship. Marriage is religiously and culturally legal bound that is tied between two persons. Marriage is most important social institution so it is most important concern of any person's life. It is mate searching procedure. Selection of spouse is a process which leads to the marriage. It is process which varies geographically and demographically (varying values and attitudes) and from person to person (psychological). Due to variations in selection process rules differ from place to place. There are various factors which affect spouse selection criteria like personality, family, class and society.

Marriage is legally, culturally, socially sanctioned union between two persons, who are can make family of their own. It is union of two people known as spouse. Since the advent of human life on planet, spouse selection has been most important event. Nambi, (2005) sees marriage as, marriage affects many aspects of life including physical health and longevity, mental health and happiness and economic well-being. The definition of marriage is not defined universally, as mostly it is defined as husband and wife living together having



sexual relation, share economic resources and being recognized as father and mother. But around the world there are many types of marriages which are unconventional, lack above mentioned traits. Religion is also important part of mate selection. In Islam, marriage is religiously sanctioned through the process called 'Nikah' while process of mate selection is carried out culturally. Marriage is religious duty and a moral safeguard as well as social necessity. It means that contract between two individuals is important for survival and health of society who procreate which is important in propagation and running of society. Religiosity is one of the important traits that people want to see in their spouse. People in middle-east emphasized religiosity in spouse and other religiously determined traits. Layla et al. (2008) explored in their research that religiosity in spouse selection and marital satisfaction among married men and women found out that in a rating that correlation with marital satisfaction for women is weak and little or no relationship for men. Selection of spouse is very interesting phenomenon where two individuals have right to choose their own life partner. However, in Pakistan few people are allowed to select their own spouse. It is compromised in Pakistan because of strong relations exist among people. Our Pakistani society does not allow individuals to choose their own spouse due to rigid caste and creed system. Some marriages like exchange marriages are also carried out with the purpose of strengthening and safeguarding interest. In some cases, such marriages are resisted but girls showed acceptance under the influence and logic of a dominant culture. Gender roles vary from one society to another; women have been used as a commodity, exchanged as a gift and exchanged in a marriage to develop social

cohesion and to develop alliances. It is perceived that exchange marriage maintains equality between daughter and sister with that of other exchanged siblings. Thus, in some cases selection of spouse is also carried out through exchange method. In this case partner's consent is not taken.

Selecting a marriage partner is culturally defined process which varies from one culture to another. From the beginning to end various questions encountered are tackled merely on the basis of how cultural norms see the questions. How would you initiate a procedure of mate selection? What criteria would you use? To what extent would you consider opinions of relatives? When you look for the answers of these questions around the world, answers would not be same. Among these physical appearance is most frequently accepted. Age, body shape, personal adornment, special facial appearances are the major focus. Some people around the world who want to search out their own soul mate, such a people advertise their criteria through media especially in print and social media. In Pakistan we usually see such advertisement in everyday newspaper and other matrimonial websites on internet. Those advertisements prominently show requirements of a person like caste, creed and sect.

In Pakistan, mate selection is influenced by traditional values linked with arranged marriages meantime love marriages are also internalized or assimilated from western world. It means that mating process is going under change as people are adopting western values.

## **1.1. Statement of the problem**

In today's society, young people who are ready to tie knot of marriage seek spouse with criteria of perfect mate. Do they get what they idealize? This question remained unsolved in the literature. As we are living in the modern world, the spouse selection for modern youth demand perfect match for themselves. The process of mate selection should follow the criteria a young men and women propose. As the spouse is important factor of individual's life and for next generation too, this makes mating procedure most important event. This should follow the procedure with the will of person and keeping his criteria under supervision, besides what ideal criteria person proposes.

While doing spouse selection various issues come under way. Those hurdles are creation of ideal criteria created by the person in his or her mind. This research is in the pursuit of knowledge what that ideal criteria young people have in their minds and how they end up in this tricky scenario? What is problem which leads to unexpected partner contrary to idealized criteria they keep in their minds? There are many reasons behind, one of them is, although person idealize specific traits which are beyond the reach of his standards. In such situation they rely on satisfying situation which might not be in the range of binocular. Another reason old traditional marriage systems of arranged and exchange marriage.

## **1.2. Research Question**

What are the factors that determine spouse selection among GB's youth? What do they ideally aspire to and what is that they eventually end up with?

## **1.3. Research Objectives**

Objectives of this research were

1. To explore Ideal spouse selection among Gilgit-Baltistan youth.
2. To find out real spouse selection among Gilgit-Baltistan youth.
3. To figure out contradiction between ideal and real spouse selection criteria.

## **1.4. Significance of the study**

As the marriage is important institution of family. Everyone is going to get married one day. Person proposes specific traits in his/her spouse to be. While doing spouse selection person idealized specific traits. It is found out in geographically reviewed literature that geographically people have different criteria of spouse selection. It varies from one culture to another that is reason why spouse selection criteria varies around the world. One of the mysteries remained unknown in literature is that, do the people end up meeting idealized spouse. This research seeks to find why people idealize specific characteristics in spouse before marriage and her/his spouse have those idealized traits?

**CHAPTER NO. 2**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Spouse selection Globally**

Mate selection process has been extensively studied by many different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, biology. Burness (1986) introduced many cultures, education, caste, religion, race, nationality, age and other cultural factors play a significant role in the choice of a mate. Even in the highly industrialized societies, these factors have not been entirely eliminated when choosing a marital partner. Since the advent of human life on planet, spouse selection has been most important event. Nambi(2005)explained marriage affects many aspects of life including physical health and longevity, mental health and happiness and economic well-being. Since the advent of human life on planet, spouse selection has been most important event. Marriage affects many aspects of life including physical health and longevity, mental health and happiness and economic well-being. Goode (1963) wrote as the family is only social institution after religion that is formally developed in all societies. Wilson(1992, 2001)explained in the recent studies it is found that young people seek compatibility because partner of the same age has more understanding and exposure to the world. This similarity of ages means satisfaction of couple increases by maintaining kindness and understanding, intelligence and personality becomes exciting. zeib un Nisa (2006) defined spouse selection is like a market and rules of selection are determined the forms of exchange between partners and households. O'Neil (2006) said due to the cultural differentiation around the globe rules varies from one region to another. Spouse selection criteria, is not same across the globe it varies from society to society and generally it is culturally defined norms. Even the

concept of physical attractiveness varies culturally. According to him, in traditional African societies plump and large bodies are attractive while in Europe and North America such features are considered as ugly. In China, moon shaped faces are considered attractive. It means that selection criteria are not a personal matter. Goode (1963) explained the relative evaluation the society places on the spouses, they do for the family line. Moavhedi (2015) says in his paper family and society have more influence than personality on spouse selection and financial status still plays an undeniable role in spouse selection which is sadly become more important issue for male. Layla A. Asmaraiet. Al (2002) explained in terms of religiosity both men and women stated that the spousal religiosity is important decision in mate selection.

#### **2.4 Spouse selection in United States of America**

People of United states of America select spouse in the same manner as people of Korea and China do. Badahdah (2004) found in United States of America Muslims have criteria for both man and women. In USA, while advertising for marriage women express themselves beautiful than men do, while men prefer younger girls. Women in USA seek men with strong financial background and emotionally stabled partner than men do. Roebuck (2016) found that the Africans American college students seek spouse in such a way that female prefer career-oriented males, financially stable and hard-working while the males prioritize physical attraction). Shuraydi (2002) said in his deep study of hispanic americans prefer spouse language, culture and religion. Murray and Holmes (1997) research suggested that holding idealized or overly positive

image of one's romantic partner is beneficial to the relationship and mental health.

Betina (2014) said in her research that in United States of America, research 'the ideal versus real spouse' showed that when actual and ideal experiences are congruent, higher relationship expectations and more positive well-being results whereas discrepant actual-ideal experience predict dissatisfaction and more negative well-being. Kristin (2016) found the ideality and reality of spouse for the Mexican American women ideal spouse is one who is trustworthy, no communication gap and respect for each other when interviewed they in reality there is no communication, disrespect and wide gap of trust is found.

### **2.3 Spouse selection in Korea and China**

Buss et al. (1990) In Korean society men prefer mates who are physically attractive whereas women prefer mates who are able to provide material resources. Korean women prefer mates who have clear resource-acquisition potential, and men prefer attractive mates. Attractiveness is relatively more important to men than to women. Brown (1994) showed in the results that men are more romantic than women and that women and men differ in their mate selection criteria. It is also found that parental involvement in marriage decisions is considered legitimate. Yin (2017) in his study found that the gendered differences of spouse selection criteria in contemporary China denote deep social and cultural expectations for young men and women in rapidly changing China.



## **2.2 Spouse selection in Middle East**

In contrary to other spouse selection around the world people of middle east have their own criteria. Their priorities are quite different from that of rest of the world. Nasar (1996) pointed out that in middle-east, Saudi Arab they have a very strong tendency to marry homogeneously in terms of age, religion, sect, nationality, and caste, although the numbers of those marrying across these lines has increased in the past 10 years, especially among people of higher socio-economic status who have college education and high status jobs. Parsaie and Refahi (2015) found that in Iran, female idealize spouse with features having psychological state, morality and socio-economic status while male prefer spouse with qualities psychological state, morality and appearance however fidelity, honesty and obligation were common criteria for both sexes. Lily (2020) it was found that men valued the characteristics of honesty, obedience, kindness and caring most highly while women valued honesty, responsibility, caring and faithfulness as the most important elements of spouse

## **2.5 Spouse selection in Hasidic Society**

Block (2013) saw following traits that people idealized in Hasidic society, people deal with appreciable number of factors such as age, external appearance, intellectual abilities, and genetic compatibility while some families prefer family's financial status, lineage and general history of health.

## **2.6 Spouse selection is subcontinent**

Unlike the rest of the world where people are independent in choosing spouse in subcontinent are not fully independent in choosing spouse. In subcontinent, mostly spouse selection is carried out by parents and well-wishers, arranged marriage. Goode (1963) in his study figured out that young people are unable to find spouse for themselves thus they rely on their parents to execute this task. Arranged marriages are predicated on the supposition that because of a variety of reasons such as imperfect and incomplete information. Sonia (2004) in her research in India found out that the education of groom and age of bride has the largest effect on matching behavior in India. The researcher also found out that the marital transfer from brides and their families to the grooms and their families increases the likelihood of women marrying men of similar type. Shireen et al (2012) explored in research that women experiencing semi or self-arranged marriages were more likely to than those in family arranged marriages to communicate and interact with their husband and those in semi-arranged marriages are less likely to experience marital violence. Youjin et al. (2018) explored that marriage market is one of the channels through which women's education affects life outcomes. Educated women appear to experience autonomy in making decision about spouse.

## **2.7 Spouse selection in Pakistan**

Due to cultural variations across Pakistan, a spouse selection criterion varies. There are various researches conducted show various results. Korson (1969) sought through his research paper that.com family and cultural settings impact

spouse selection criteria. In spouse selection process students from Karachi took more liberal stance while selecting spouse than Lahore students and engagement attitude for males in Karachi students felt more important than males on the other side in it was undivided. Saima et al. (2018) found out in comprehensive study that beauty is important characteristic beside faithfulness, neatness, physical attractiveness, talent for arts and courage are consider as vital traits for selection of spouse in Pakistani cultural context Research conducted in Peshawar reveals female select their spouse with feature tall, well dressed, cleaned shave, fair color and physically attractive males of same age and living in a nuclear family. Hussain and Gulzar (2015) sought in their resesarch that both Pakistani men and women idealize psycho-social preferences in the mate selection process. Men prefer beauty of women while women prioritize educated men as the spouse selection criteria. In Pakistani society process of spouse selection occur through arranged marriage system and in some cases via exchange marriages system. Zaman (2013) found out about spouse selection in rural society of south Punjab that the purpose of exchange marriage is to strengthen bond between two families, solidarity, cohesion and cultural concept of honor and blood relatedness. This system in traditional society is not only spouse selection system but it leads to create social cohesion. Huraydi (2002) found out that the Pakistani women living in a western society prefer three traits in spouse language, culture and religion. Husain and Gulzar (2015) found that, similar to other tradition based societies, the socio-economic background of the prospective family was considered an important criterion in reaching a decision about a suitable

partner. Qureshi (1991) Zaidi & Shuraydi (2002) the opinion of parents and family elders weigh more than the choice of a girl for whom a partner is being chosen. Girls have a subordinate position or little say in choosing an intimate partner. Their role is passive and limited only to accepting the decisions made by parents and family elders.

Spouse selection around the world is carried out through various channels and uses various signals in this process. As the spouse selection is cultural phenomenon due to existence of multiple cultures around the world these phenomenon varies globally. In the matter of spouse selection, traits are same around the world and tribute varies. Almost most of the men prefer physically attractive female besides education. Explanation of beauty differs culturally. People living in America define physical attractiveness as fair complexion with good height. On the other hand round faces in China are considered as attractive while same features in Africa are considered as ugly. Bold lips and big nose is beautiful in Africa while such a features in Europe are considered ugly. Muslims living in United States of America and people residing in Middle-east prefer religiosity as important trait in spouse selection while such trait is not much important in the rest of the world.

## **2.2. Assumptions**

Following are the assumptions of the study. This study assumes that

- Both men and women possess their own spouse selection criteria.
- Both male and female have idealized specific traits in their own future spouse.
- Both the male and female have real life experience of marriage life.
- Real spouse has specific criteria that exist in real life.

**CHAPTER NO. 3**

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.0 THEORITICAL FRAMWORK**

Theoretical frameworks are formulated to give clarifying explanation and understanding of social phenomena. It introduces and describes the theory why research problem is under study.

#### **3.1 Social Exchange Theory**

George C. Homans (1959) explained social exchange theory as social exchange theory is psychological and sociological theory that studies the social behavior in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risk and benefit. Theory further says that if the costs of relationship are higher than rewards such as a lot of efforts or money were put into relationship and not reciprocated than relationship may be terminated or abandoned.

Cost means any negative value to the person in the relationship. Such as cost means negatives of a partner.

Rewards mean the elements of relationship that have positive value to a person. Rewards can be support, love and companionship.

Social exchange theory has its own outcome of satisfaction and dependence. This theory further argues that with benefits and costs come under the calculation. These costs and rewards are equally demand from both sides of male and female. However, these demands are equally fulfilled or not from both sides is tried to determine in this research.

### **3.1.1 Application of theory**

In the context of spouse selection and idealization of spouse this theory explains two parties in the relationship calculate costs and benefits. Social exchange theory applies to human relationships those who are romantically and emotionally attached with each other. This theory is also applicable in economically based relationships such as business etc. when a person seeks the spouse he or she analyze costs and rewards of the spouse. The Spouse selection criterion determines both costs and rewards. People around the world while seeking spouse possess certain criteria. When two persons go into the relationship both parties expect some positive value from each other. This theory further applies in this way that the continuation of relationship depends on values receive from each other. Negative values lead to termination while positive value leads to continuation. This cannot be ignored that calculation of cost and benefit come under during the relationship. As the topic of research says that spouse selection is pursuit of seeking spouse that we idealize. With those ideal criteria we seek spouse in the world around us. In the course of event we come up with costs and rewards in the end. Rewards that we get are formation of our own family and completion of religion. Cost it offers is the world we cherish to live freely without worries come to an end. We are all dependent on ourselves. Another part of research is that real spouse, coming with idealized criteria and ending up with someone who can or cannot possess criteria that we idealized before.



### **3.2 Matching Hypothesis**

The matching hypothesis is popular psychological and social psychology theory proposed by Walster et al. (1966).

The matching hypothesis refers to the proposition that people are attracted to and the formation of relationships with individuals who resemble them on a variety of attributes, including demographic characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, and education level), personality traits, attitudes and values, and even physical attributes (e.g., attractiveness).

Matching hypothesis argue the idea that people are more likely to attract romantically towards people who are as attractive as themselves and less attractive ones. This further states that people are more likely to form and succeed in a committed relationship with someone who is equally socially desirable, typically in the form of physical attraction. Those couples who are married but differing in a physical attraction are attached by other variables which compensate attractiveness. For example, men with wealth and status can attract women because some women overlook attractiveness. Various researchers tested matching hypothesis, in overall results theory has been supported by stating that the partners who are similar in terms of physical attractiveness are looking to form union.

#### **3.2.1 Application of theory**

The theory suggests that there is tendency for both men and women to marry person who resemble them. It further says people assess their own value and

then make realistic choices by selecting the best available potential partners who are also likely to share this same level of attraction. It is in common observation that people tend to make relationship who are more compatible to them. People usually tend to form relationship with those who are sharing same characteristics and other traits. People possess spouse selection criteria, it means that people likely to form relationship with perfect match. That is reason why people idealize criteria. This matching hypothesis theory perfectly supports research topic because research topic is all about matching of two individuals. Besides it also seeks to find out idealized traits in spouse that people really want to see in their spouses. In the pursuit of spouse selection people idealize various attributes on the basis of ethnicity, culture, sect, age and lifestyle. Some people can go out of ethnicity to match their spouse and cannot go out of sect. some people see this phenomenon as barrier in the way of spouse selection while another group of people blame nature and consider as segregation of people in the society. As the people seek such a spouse who can perfectly match their ideal criteria they propose. In the process of searching for spouse people seek such a spouse who are equally possess traits in the society around the people.

## **CHAPTER NO. 4**

### **CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONIZATION**

## **4.1 Conceptualization**

Conceptualization is process of designing the concepts with the help of existing literature.

### **4.1.1 Ideal Spouse selection**

O, Neil (2006) defined spouse selection as follows:

Spouse selection is the process of choosing partner with whom to form marriage bond or long-term marriage like relationship.

Nimbi (2005) explained spouse selection as:

In modern societies spouse selection is familiar, recognized and accepted process where every individual search for partner.

Zaib Un Nisa (2006) explained that:

Spouse selection process is like a market and rules of selection are determined by the forms of exchange between partners and households.

### **4.1.2 Real spouse selection**

Kimberly (2000) defined real spouse selection as

Real spouse selection is choosing partner with whom to form a marriage bond or long term marriage-like relationship. While the personal preference is key component in spouse selection process, structural influence also exist.

Nasar (1996) It is process of choosing partner with whom to form a marriage bond or long term marriage like relationship.

According to Bass and Burness (1986)

Spouse selection is choice of marriage partner is guided by an inherent human inclination to select spouse that will maximize fitness i.e. number of surviving children and grandchildren. Many factors like health, wealth, social status, beauty, religion affect choice of spouse and some differ between men and women.

## **4.2 Operationalization**

Operationalization is process by which defines how concept is measured, observed or manipulated within a particular study.

### **4.2.1 Ideal spouse selection**

1. Ideal spouse selection is choosing of marriage partner with specific attributes in the mind of person who wants to marry. Those specific traits are not necessarily attainable. Those traits formation in someone's with desire to marry who possesses traits. These traits are made up in mind phenomenon. Ideal spouse selection criteria is someone's imaginative development of particular criteria which person wishes to see in his or her spouse. Such a criteria is wish to attain but it happens contrary to the wishes.
2. Ideal spouse is searching for spouse who has certain aspired traits that you want to see in your spouse. Those are perfectly desired attributes one wishes to see in future spouse.

3. Ideal spouse selection is selection of spouse with specific traits which is made up in the mind of person. This includes idealization of traits like by both males and females.

#### **4.2.2. Real Spouse**

1. Real spouse is one who comes to life of person as a wife after marriage. It is contrary to ideal spouse, who either can possess traits that are idealized or not. Real spouse possess real social and economic status of person and faced various barriers before marriage because of idealization of specific traits.
2. Real spouse is part of one's life who usually make bond through marriage. Real spouse is one with whom person procreates and make a new family. It is not idealization but experiences living with person. Now most of decisions of life come with consultation with spouse. Both spouses depend on each other and most of life is shared realistically.
3. Real spouse is either husband or wife who is living with husband or wife. Who share rest of life with each other. Sharing of life either comes in the positive form or in the negative form. Husband and wife share life of economic and social where both face circumstances equally. In the marital life of real spouse psychological and social incompatibility comes in the pathway of marriage. In such situations both partners equally share with each other.

## **CHAPTER NO. 5**

# **METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is chapter of research describe research methods, approaches and designs in detail highlighting those used throughout the study.

### **5.1. Research Design**

This study was based on qualitative research. Through this qualitative method, data was easily analyzed and researcher sees the facts and case studies in a critical manner. This method was chosen because it made possible to explore topic broadly.

### **5.2. Universe**

The researcher conducted interviews in different districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Researcher conducted interviews from recently married people. Researcher collected data from both males and females. The universe of research was chosen Gilgit-Baltistan because research on spouse selection was not carried out before.

### **5.3. Targeted population**

The target population was taken from different districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Interview was conducted from recently married males and females. Reason for choosing different districts is get variety of data and selection of married people was to find data about their criterion before marriage and real spouse criterion.



#### **5.4. Sample Size**

The total size of sample was 15 respondents who belong to different districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Out of 15 respondents 8 females and 7 males were taken for interview. All of the respondents were married. 15 respondents were selected because after 13 respondents point of saturation reached.

#### **5.4 Sampling Technique**

Sample technique for this study was purposive sampling while selection of the respondents was based on whether participant in the research is married or unmarried. This study was based on consent. It means that sample was taken after taking proper consent from respondent.

#### **5.5 Tool of Data Collection**

The tool of data collection was in-depth interview, where questionnaire was designed for the data collection. Although to understand question and respond accordingly. In-depth interview technique was adopted by researcher because vivid answers were required from respondents. Other data collection techniques are not used because of sensitivity of research topic.

#### **5.6 Technique for Data Collection**

In this research online technique was adopted to conduct interviews from respondents. The researcher recorded interviews in mobile phones and transcribed later.

### **5.7 Tool for data analysis**

Manual coding technique is used for data analysis. In this process researcher adopted open coding, axial and selective coding technique. Out of coding researcher found out themes.

### **5.8. Technique for Data Analysis**

The researcher used qualitative data coding technique for the analysis of data. From transcribed data themes were taken to make analysis. This research focused on ideal and spouse selection among Gilgit-Baltistan youth.

### **5.9. Problem of the study**

The researcher faced problem in conducting interview due to COVID-19. To follow corona virus protocol interviewee had to conduct online interviews.

### **5.10. Ethical Concerns**

In the research the respondents were taken into confidence and made them realize that the information they provide would be kept confidential and information would not be used against them. In the research demographic questions were asked in the first part of interview.

## **CHAPTER NO.6**

### **FINDINGS**

## 6.1 Ideal spouse selection

Spouse selection is the procedure of choosing mate. Researcher took interview of fifteen respondents who belonged to different social groups such as ethnic, and sects in Gilgit-Baltistan. Geographical distribution was also considered. As Gilgit-Baltistan is consist of five different ethnic and cultural units. So, respondents shared their experiences of their marriages and mate selection procedures. Respondents said before their marriage they idealized specific traits they wanted to see in their spouse. In literature review we have studied spouse selection is cultural process, which varies from culture to culture. Due to cultural variations in GB, various spouse selection procedures exists in the region. These differences are segregated in district. Different districts have their own way to choosing spouse process. For example, selection procedure in Diamer is completely different to that of Hunza. People of Hunza are more independent in choosing spouse. The researcher asked series of questions in interview from both males and females about their ideal spouse selection criteria. Respondents' answers were quite interesting. Male respondents idealized beauty, education and good. Other traits that respondents idealized were good family background religiosity, sense of humor and sense of dress. Male respondents explained beauty as how good physical appearances are. In an interview, eight male respondents gave beauty highest priority. Besides, beauty was common trait that every respondent really wanted to see in his spouse. According to respondents, beautiful is one who is tall, fair skin color and curvy facial shape is beautiful. While size and color of eyes vary among men. Three of the respondents reported big eyes with blue color is beautiful and \_\_\_ other preferred dark eyes are beautiful. Two of the respondents said slim and thin nose is sign of beautiful while some prefer normal in size is beautiful. Among males education is one of the top priorities. When researcher asked, why education is most important trait they wanted to see in their spouse? Five of the respondent said that good educated mother can socialize her children in best way. She knows what is right and what is wrong in the society. Educated female can incorporate good behavior and teaches good social skills.

One respondent said his spouse should be religious and one reported, who wished to see liberal spouse. When respondents were asked, can they marry below their social and economic status family/ five respondents said, they will never marry someone who has low social status. There are various factors behind it one of the factors is education. Almost 99% of people are enrolled in school and women participation is high in businesses and in job sector. On the other hand, in Diamer men are dominated. Men usually decide fate of women and decide without any consent. In district Nagar, individual decides about his spouse and propose his own criteria. Whatever decision is taken male who seeks spouse decides and give final call. In some cases male decides independently. All he does is to inform his parents and family about his spouse chosen by him. In district Ghizer, researcher interviewed two people one male and one female. Male respondent completed his masters degree from well reputed institute and job holder. This male respondent was trapped in the cultural spouse selection process and tied his knot in family arranged marriage. Although he was well qualified and had luxurious job still he preferred spouse who was arranged by family and parents. On the other hand, female respondent had love marriage. She was independent in choosing her spouse. With the blessings from family and parents she married person she loved. There are three outcomes of decisional authority in spouse selection. Firstly, individual was independent in taking decision about spouse. Secondly, parents and family decide about spouse and give final decision. Third, both individual and family together decide about spouse. In the data it was found that, among males most of the decisions are taken in consultation with individual and family while among females, most of final calls about their marriage is given by parents. Those who took decision independently belonged to educated families or achieved good education by individual.

Although, level of education of both respondent was same but way of spouse selection is different. Matter of marriage is natural phenomenon which occurs through social exchange process using a universal matching mechanism where

spouse selection is carried out culturally but some of the factors remain same. As O'Neil (2006) said due to cultural variations around the globe rules varies from one region to another. As just mentioned that process varies around the globe, in the same way cultural process of spouse selection is different quite from that of rest of the world. This difference exists for both men and women in different ways although both genders might have same level of education. This is the reason because of strong family cultural values. In family no matter how much education is achieved by female still major percentage of females are under strict family rules, are decided by family. Thus spouse selection especially among females occur under direct supervision of family and relatives. Strict family values in the process of spouse selection among males also exist in Gilgit-Baltistan. Decisional authority in the families of Gilgit-Baltistan strongly exhibit, that is the reason why most of the decisions come from head of the families.

## **6.2 Ideal spouse selection among males**

To be familiar with what is ideal spouse selection criteria among Gilgit-Baltistan youth, researcher asked series of questions. Marriage and choosing spouse is universal phenomenon, which is necessary in the continuation of world. Researcher interviewed eight men, all respondents reported beauty as highest priority trait that they wanted to see in their spouse. Second highest priority is education that male prefer to see in their spouse. Let's take a look around the world and when glance into literature, we come to know that men usually prefer beautiful female mate. Physical appearance is highest priority of

male around the globe. As there is no universal definition of beauty, researcher asked about their definition of beauty and physical appearances. As they say beauty lies in the eyes of beholder and as we all are quite familiar all the human beings around the world are not same. But naturally all men around the world look for good looking female companions as Buss et al. (1990) says men prefer mates who are physically attractive. Male preferences in choosing mate selection circles around physical appearance and psychological state. It is yet to find out that why preferences are quite different in both genders however demands from both genders complement each other. It is evident from data collected by the researcher. One of the respondent responded to ideal spouse as,

*'According to my first respondent ideal spouse is educated, sensible, who could better socialize my kids, serve my parents in best way and who could serve all her obligations and rights'.*

There are people in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan that they want to choose their spouse not on the basis of look and physical appearance but on the basis of psychological development of the person. In this case educated means spouse should know what is wrong and what is right? It is not only matter of best spouse in the life but also it is matter of fate.

### **6.2.1 Physical Appearance**

On the physical appearance respondents gave different opinions of their own. Two of eight respondents said tall girl with attractive eyes are beautiful. Height and eyes generally defines beauty but color and size of eyes adds the beauty further. When it comes to attractive eyes, one says dark and big size is

attractive while one thing, blue and big size is attractive. Three respondents said fair skin with attractive eyes defines beauty while three respondents reported curvy face with fair skin is beauty. In Gilgit-Baltistan people possess these traits like fair skin, curvy face and attractive eyes. Physical appearance is complex term to define and everyone has his own views regarding it. As someone has said that 'beauty lies in the eyes of beholder'. One of the respondent reported,

*'What I mean beautiful is that, girl should have good height, beautiful hair and her eyes, nose and lips. They determine beauty of women. Big eyes with slightly slim nose with thin lips make girl beautiful. As far as education is concerned she must have knowledge of right and wrong. Whether someone is snatching her rights, she must know that. Her behavior means how she respects people and her hospitality skills'.*

Some of them like tall girls and some people like short girls. Some respondents were fascinated by large eyes and others were attracted towards small shape eyes. In the course of eyes few of respondents were in the favor of blue eyes and some of the respondents were in love with dark or black eyes. Respondents were of different opinions about the formation of facial shape or structure. Some of the respondents liked curvy facial shape while other part of respondents reported round facial structure of their spouse. One of the respondents gave his opinion about facial structure in this way, he said,

*'As far as physical appearance is concerned, face is mirror of beauty. First idea about beautiful person comes from her facial appearance. I like faces*



*which are round and like curvy around the cheeks areas. That is my ideal face structure.'*

Another respondent said,

*'Face is the centre of beauty. I think curvy faces are more beautiful and the round ones. My opinion about the beauty is that curvy faces enhance the beauty of women. The more curvy face is more beautiful it is.'*

Hence from above statements of the respondents we can finalize that perspective of beauty varies from one person to another person because every person has his own way to look at the beauty. For people physical appearance is in the form of behavioral beauty.

One of the male respondents reported while idealizing

*"Ideal spouse is one who is beautiful, educated, liberal, and pursue her ambitions."*

Here we can see that respondent is quite explicit about his criteria of spouse that he wants to spend life with. In the process of data collection most of the men prefer physical appearance as a major factor in spouse selection. Next to trait men prefer education as second highest priority trait that he wants to see in the spouse. While liberalism in spouse is very rare factor that male want to see in the spouse. As the society of Gilgit-Baltistan is getting more advanced knowledge thus more males prefer more educated spouse so that together as a couple they compete the world. This stance is quite famous among the young

males of Gilgit-Baltistan. This union helps to make strong, happy and successful life for their children.

### **6.2.2 Education**

Gilgit-Baltistan has highest literacy rate among all provinces of Pakistan. According to Alif-e-alan GB has highest female literacy in Pakistan. That is reason why male in the region prefer educated women. One of the respondents explained definition of the term 'educated'.

According to respondent

*“Educated means person who has studied at least graduation and Masters.”*

As the education in Gilgit-Baltistan getting higher and higher every year. Most male prefer educated female partner. One of the basic purpose of seeking educated spouse is to seek support in planning and best educated companion in difficult times.

Another said respondent said

*“Educated is someone who has sense of right and wrong, who should be familiar with what is wrong and right?”*

People in the GB region are socially conscious of education and role of women in the socialization of children. That is why every people in GB are aware of importance of education. In the recent past women came forward to participate in almost every aspect of life and achievements are in the front of everyone. Those successes stories started to come when women started to go

to schools. That is reason why male prefer educated female spouse. Educated female with skills can contribute to economy of home. In GB most women who are educated have dual roles i.e. job and housewife. These hardworking women encourage other young women to pursue education and handy skills out of education. That is reason why most men prefer educated life partner. Other idealized traits that men family background, sense of humor and dress. One respondent idealized religiosity trait that he really wanted to see in his spouse. Behavior of female is considered as one of the most important traits that respondents really wanted to see in their spouse.

### **6.3 Ideal Spouse Selection among Females**

Like male, female respondents reported their own idealized spouse selection criteria. Female respondents idealized honesty, financially independent and caring spouse. To familiarize what are the traits the female really wanted to see in her spouse researcher asked question about what kind of traits that they want most to see in her spouse. One respondent put the words in easy way.

*“Honesty, loyalty and caring. These are traits that I really wanted to see in my spouse.”*

Women in GB are educated and empowered women and yet cultural constraints exist. As spouse selection is cultural process. They have equipped themselves with power of knowledge and skills, as they say, knowledge is power. As young females propose their own criteria it means that they possess criteria and idealize their life partner. They make their own choice in lives. It

has been observed from data that females like to choose life partner who is caring and supportive. Women deem to have supportive and caring husband because place for hardworking women in society is challenging. Women who pursue careers want life partner who is supportive and caring. Supportive is one who helps them to achieve her careers and stand beside with them in difficult times. As most of the women idealized caring, loyal and supportive husband, it orients the ideas that women in GB are career oriented and achieve their ambitions with their life partners. One respondent said

*“Ideal spouse should be supportive in educational and professional career, honest, loyal and caring.”*

Young females in GB are determined to achieve ambitions in life and participate in different aspects of life. One of the reasons for passion in profession is that male encourage female in the region. In GB women education is highly encouraged and supported from family and accepted my husbands. So it is dream of every young female is to have supportive and caring husband who will stand with them all the time and care each other. Females in the region are not fully independent in choosing spouse that is reason why their marital decisions are affected by those who have decisional authority.

#### **6.4 Decisional Authority in spouse selection**

There were various reported decisional authority issues. Gilgit-Baltistan is culturally diverse region and three major sects like Shia'a, Sunni and Imamia-

Ismalia. These three different sects have three procedure of choosing spouse. Within sects culture also matters. For example, people living in district Diamer who belong to Sunni sect have very rigid spouse selection procedure. Spouse selection procedure is carried out by head of house who is usually man. Women are bound to household and do not have right to express their will or desire. Matters of women are handled by men. In the spouse selection process women in living district Diamer are bound and female parents decide future spouse of women. In the villages of district Diamer women are not allowed to go to schools and are least empowered in GB. Two respondents belonged to district Diamer. One respondent is female and another is male. There are three outcomes of decisional authority in spouse selection. First, individual who is completely independent in choosing spouse on the basis of criteria proposed. In such a case individual sought his/her own spouse, where decisional authority rests in his/her own hands. Secondly, parents and individual decide together and in decision taking both individual and family consult with each other. Final call is given when both family and parents approve proposal. Third, choosing spouse for individual rests in the hands of parents. Parents give final call. If we see geographically in GB, different districts have different literacy rates. For example in districts Hunza, Nagar and Gilgit where people have high literacy rate as result people are aware of their rights and will. My respondent from district Hunza said.

*“I was independent in choosing spouse. I had ten years long relationship which we turned it into marriage.”*

Hunza has highest literacy rate in Pakistan. People are more independent in choosing spouse. According to respondent most of the marriages in Hunza are love marriages and propose their own criteria regarding their spouse. On the behalf of parents, parents respect opinion and accept proposal of the children. One of the female respondents who was nutrition officer and had proper schooling reported,

*“I had proposed my own criteria but it was only in my mind. People send their own proposals and my family and parents weighed. They just informed me about proposal and asked me to consider. In proposals I said yes but they rejected. There came a time where we were all agree at one proposal. I was not completely independent in decision taking about spouse.”*

In Gilgit-Baltistan women are empowered educationally and take most of their own decisions in education career. Although women are educated, have skills and doing jobs. In such cases, culture dominates and things go in the way of culture. In most of the cases in district Nagar among females spouse selection is carried out by parents and family. Women whose decisions are handled by mostly end up running with their lovers. Respondent seemed satisfied of the decision. If person's consent is taken than it is big blessing for her in two ways. Firstly, parents decide what is best for her with their blessings. Secondly, considering my opinion in the most important decision of life is also blessing.

In democratic families decision is taken on consent but individual's freedom still does not exist. In democratic families respect for elders and their

experience is useful. That is why, most important part of decision comes from elders but young people are not ignored. One respondent who belonged to democratic family said,

*“Final authority is something that does not exist in our family. If whole family is agree, than decision is final.”*

There are other families like democratic, where individual who seek spouse and other family members all together sit in a family meetings and decide what type of spouse their person deserves. Here any individual person does not hold decisional authority. As this respondent mentioned “final authority does not exist in our family”. Some of the families in the region do possess liberal views regarding societal and family affairs. In such families decisions are taken in a democratic way.

Thus, decisional authority is in the hands of parents and level of educational qualification does not matter. In some cases people are independent in taking decision about spouse. Overall there are cultural constraints exists which effects spouse selection decisional authority, although people are well educated and highly professional among males. In the matters of females mostly parents decide their future partner. In some cases, females’ opinion is considered and some cases they are just informed about their spouse. For females decisional authority is same across Gilgit-Baltistan. Education has little impacts on spouse selection because culture is dominant.

However, in some case in making decisions about spouse selection especially choosing traits come from sisters and other siblings. However, sisters have

strong edge in this process. Thus we come to conclusion that not all the decisions come from parents, sisters also have their own roles which are stronger. One of the respondents said,

*'My sisters have more authority in spouse selection. When I asked why your father does not have authority? He said as you wish, you can marry whoever you want to marry. As in the family we all are living together so family opinion is important.'*

No matter how much you yearn for someone, if someone fails to get approval from sisters and other siblings than the proposal does not reach to the parents. most of the respondents were quite agreed to it. There are three outcomes of decisional authority in spouse selection authority. Firstly, out of eight respondents, four male respondents choosing spouse was their own decision but not independently. This decision was taken with consent to their families. In such situations, respondents said they gave final call. While two respondents said marital decision is on taken on consent with family and parents. In such cases parents give final call. Two respondents reported that they have taken decision independently. All of the male respondents were graduated. Eight male respondents said that they do not have problem in marrying outside their family. Five respondents said they have problem marrying outside Gilgit-Baltistan culture. While seven respondents reported that they are not allowed to marry outside sect and only one respondent mention marrying from another sect is not issue. One respondent said he had to renounce his relationship because he could not marry outside sect. Eight respondents reported that they married after graduation. Two respondents said although they were engaged or in a relationship during their studies.

No matter how rigid family system is while choosing spouse for male person, sisters have vital role, because they are real hunters in this matter.



## 6.5 Barriers in Spouse Selection

In the process of spouse selection both males and females face various barriers. Geographical distribution of Gilgit-Baltistan informs demography of person. It is distributed in regions and each region is recognized with its own sect and culture. Most of the barriers and challenges are sectarian and cultural. Among fifteen respondents only three said that sect does not matter. Thirteen respondents reported that marrying outside sect is not allowed. Inter-regional marriages are also rare in Gilgit-Baltistan. In Islam, marriage is religiously sanctioned through the process called 'Nikah' while process of mate selection is carried out culturally. Marriage is religious duty and a moral safeguard as well as social necessity. It means that contract between two individuals is important for survival and health of society who procreate which is important in propagation and running of society. Selection of spouse is very interesting phenomenon where two individuals have right to choose their own life partner. However, in Pakistan few people are allowed to select their own spouse. It is compromised in Pakistan because of strong relations exist among people. Our Pakistani society does not allow individuals to choose their own spouse due to rigid caste and creed system. Some marriages like exchange marriages are also carried out with the purpose of strengthening and safeguarding interest. In some cases such marriages are resisted but girls showed acceptance under the influence and logic of a dominant culture. There are three regions in GB Gilgit, Diamer and Baltistan region. Marriages within these three regions are very rare, although sectarian compatibility exist. Even existence of sectarian and religious compatibility hurdles marriage. Where there is not sectarian

barrier, there comes cultural barrier. Due to cultural variation among three regions marriages are very rare. Even Over the last three decades sectarian conflicts occurred multiple times and thousands of people died as result of sectarian violence. These conflicts pooled people of GB in two groups. If two individuals who belong to different sects like each other yet family would not approve marriage. There is only one reason behind this; the sect. One respondent reported,

*“I think marrying someone outside caste, family and culture is big issue. In our society, religion and sect is important. . I faced huge issue in marrying out of my sect. I was in love with girl who was from another sect. both of our families rejected this proposal just because of sect. Simply put, I was not allowed to marry out of sect. I do not know about reasons my parents, especially, my father had objections.”*

In this scenario respondent was in relationship with girl who belonged to another sect. They both wanted to marry but families did not approved this marital bond that both wanted to form. It is not big deal marrying outside family and caste but sect and religion are biggest barriers in the way of spouse selection. One respondent who married within his caste and sect said it is not big deal marrying outside sect and family. Respondent said,

*“For me it is not big issue. I do not have experience. I have married within caste and sect.”*

In this case respondent took these barriers easy although they biggest barriers between two loving people. In the matter first respondent it is clearly seen in

the first case that respondent face hurdle in marrying his lover. On the other hand, marrying out of family and caste is also not big deal. This matter is more difficult for females. Who do not even think to get marry outside sect but they do so by revolting family values. Sect may be problem but caste and family is not issue in choosing spouse. Respondent said,

*“As a female it is big issue. My family couldn’t allow me to marry out of sect and marrying outside family is not a problem. That is what I think husband is from well-educated family and so was my father. Although we had different families and everything was same. When my told her family about her relationship with boy wanted to marry him but boy belonged to another sect. Her family did not allow her, in the end she ran away with guy”.*

Most of the relations persist when respect exist. Due to sectarian segregation in GB people are divided on sectarian basis. There is very little respect for love. When two people with different background attach with each other with love than harmony develops between two communities. Two people can initiate peace but elders do not allow young generation to do so. Everyone does not murder happiness, in the name of sacrifice. Some sacrifices are murders, like spouse selection. There comes a situation where person revolts when decision comes against wishes of that person.

One of respondents who had love marriage and his belonged to Punjab reported,

*“It is big deal marrying out of your culture and sect. my wife is from Punjab. For me it is not a problem. People are making problem out of it. Convincing*

*family seemed problem. When I asked my brother and father, my brothers resisted. My father said ‘ jaokar lo shadi Malik shah k sath(7) baytain ha’. My mum was always on my side. She agreed without hesitation”.*

Although not everyone is bond to cultural believes. Some go beyond cultural chain and break barriers. Sometimes there comes a situation when life important than culture than such a decisions are taken. Although educational qualification is not exceptional than that of other respondents however this respondent belong to lower middle class family.

### **6.5.1. Religious Barriers**

One of the problems that young people face in Gilgit-Baltistan is that parents do not let their children marry outside of their own sect. In this case respondent took these barriers easy although they biggest barriers between two loving people. In the matter first respondent it is clearly seen in the first case that respondent face hurdle in marrying his lover. On the other hand, marrying out of family and caste is also not big deal. This matter is more difficult for females. Who do not even think to get marry outside sect but they do so by revolting family values. sect may be problem but caste and family is not issue in choosing spouse. Most of the respondents who had experience out of this trauma faced hurdles offered by family. One of the respondents said,

*‘We are not allowed to marry or get into marital relationship from other sects. First of all inter-sect marriages are rare however those whoever take interest are being denied from their families. Those who are pre-marriage affairs do*

*not let their parents ruin their relationship. They run away from their families and make their own world. So I think sect is one of the biggest hurdles.'*

In this case we can see that respondent has personal experience who had affair with another sect girl, whoever which did not succeed. Most of the marriages and love affairs suffered due to the sect barrier. There is nothing biggest cultural or economic hurdle than that of sectarian barrier. Shia person does not get permission to sunni or ismaili persons and vice versa.

## **6.6 Socio-economic Factors**

There were no reported socio economic issues that arose in all of the respondents. Family status issues did arise for some of the respondents, but the respondents were pretty vague about what constituted "family status". There appeared no uniform measure on which to base their perception of the family status. There were no economic preferences from male respondents. Respondent reported spouse as her personal life affiliated member for life time. Spouse's economic background is not concern of their life. On the other hand, social status of spouse is important matter.

One of the respondents said,

*"As far as social and economic status is concerned, I think social status is important for me. If girl is educated and pursued good education than economic status does not matter. Spouse's family reputation and self-respect is important. When I was seeking spouse family status was one of my criteria."*

In Gilgit-Baltistan, economical classes does not exist people have same economic levels. Due high literacy rate people have same level of opportunity in business and job sectors. Although,there exists social status among people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Social status is judged by integrity and reputation of family. Family's negative and positive roles determine reputation and integrity in society. Most of the respondents preferred social status over economic status. Respondents gave reasons for the preference of social status over economic status. Integrity and reputation comes from respect to values and norms that is why social status is important. Another respondent reported,

*“I think social and economic status is not a big problem. I have married who is below my social and economic status. If spouse's family has good reputation it is enough. Family reputation means how people treat us and people's reactions towards us.”*

As the respondent emphasis reputation of family and does not care about economic status of family. As researcher mentioned earlier due to economically class less society people prefer social status of family. As Being the close observer of Gilgit-Baltistan society it is came to consider the fact that marriages are not carried out on the basis of socio-economic class. Contrary to this opinion another respondent said,

*“Social and economic class of spouse does not matter because after marriage my spouse belongs to my family and she will be recognized with my family. So social and economic status does not matter to me.”*

Contrary to other respondents this respondent explicitly reports socio-economic status of spouse. For him spouse's reputation is attached to type of values he possesses. Gilgit-Baltistan is class less society where marriages are being carried out on the basis of well-being of the individual in the society. It is rare case that someone seeks to marry for social and economic class of the spouse. In such cases economic well-being is more emphasized. In this case respondent is quite explicit about the fact that his spouse after marriage will be attached to his family and represent his family and his family honor in the society. Respondent is in believe that his spouses' family income is none of his business and finally he knows that family structures in Gilgit-Baltistan do not support any claim on share of wife's family business. That is another reason why instead of most of male respondents prefers education and physical appearance as highest priority while choosing spouse. To some extent social status of spouse does matter however economic status is almost negligible.

### **6.7. Post Marriage Relationship**

Respondents reported various issues face in marriage relationship. One of the biggest issues reported is performing roles in everyday life. Second issues respondent reported is that fight between couples. Most of time fight is result

of not sharing with each other. Some newly wedded respondents live with special blessings because they have experienced fight in their marriage life. Three respondents got married six or seven months ago, they reported that they are newly wedded that is why they have not experienced any type of imbalance in their marital relationship. Other respondents who were performing same roles did not report imbalance in their lives. One of the three respondents said,

*“It is been year since we married. I have not experienced anything like that. We both have jobs no economical issues.”*

Respondents where both (husband and wife) have job, they have not experienced any imbalances while performing their roles. Three female respondents reported that they are having issues in performing roles. They are having problems because they have to stay at homes all day although they were all educated. Two females respondent also mentioned that being a female they had to manage their household and job which is quite difficult for them. One respondent said,

*“I think yes. Psychological incompatibility we usually face”.*

Respondents said that marriage has positive impacts on them. It is life changing moment for them. Two respondents said they are now more career oriented now and six respondents reported that marriage has brought more responsibilities on their shoulders which has made them more family oriented.



Five female respondents mentioned positive changes in their life while two respondents reported that marriage has is barrier in the way of their in the pursuit of ambition. Female respondents also expressed positive impacts out of their marriage.

When respondents were asked about happiness and distress factors in they responded in this way. Five male respondents said distress comes when we both avoid sharing with each other. Three respondents reported that incompleteness of responsibilities cause distress between them. While all seven female respondents reported both sharing and responsibilities behind distress at home. When respondents were asked about do their spouses possess aspired traits they wanted to see/ five female respondents said, initially their spouses were inspiring but started to change with passage of time. They also reported that spouses do not possess all traits they aspired but marital relationship is good and satisfactory. Two respondents said that this marriage could be better and not satisfied out of marriage. One male respondent said nature of women is difficult to understand. He also reported that before marriage she was totally different, in terms of behavior. After marriage her behavior has changed negatively.

Respondents said

*“Sometimes it seems like we both belong to different worlds. I am little bit secular and she is religious. I think that is difference. She likes to save money I like to spend. If I spend extra money than in such a situation I feel incompatibility”.*

Psychological issues reported by respondent, where two opposite minds came to marriage bond one is secular, who is only involved in worldly affairs while his spouse is religious. Two different levels of minds mean two people who are socialized in two different ways. Another psychological problem they were facing was on expenditures. One likes to spend while his spouse likes to save money.

I could marry more educated women. One male respondent was more satisfied and said his spouse possess all the traits he wanted to see. Four respondents said that marriage could be better.

All the seven male respondents said that they promised to fulfill education of spouses, which they completed while one respondent said,

*“My family promised continuation of her education. Alhamdulillah, I have fulfilled that promised. Besides, settlement promises were condition with where I get a job”.*

Male respondents reported that at the time marriage spouses’ education was intermediate and in some case recently got admission in university. Education is most valuable asset that everyone wants to get. So, parents conditioned completion of education for their girls.

While in one case respondent reported as,

*“I have not promised anything. When we decided to get married we promised to remain attached with each other forever.”*

Not every time education and settlement is promised when two beloved ones join by marriage, they remain to stay together forever. Respondent had love marriage and married his class fellow girl. Despite of cultural, regional and sectarian differences between two of them yet they decide to live together forever. On the other hand, two people belong to same culture and sect still fight in the marriage relationship. In the first case, this couple is bound by love. In the second case, two individuals are made by people to make bond and forced to make love each other. As researcher mentioned earlier that, respondents from district Diamer, where female respondent reported she was just informed about her spouse few days before marriage. Respondent from Hunza said, she was trapped in the web of culture. As culture is stronger than education that is why spouse selection process is dominated by culture.

#### **6.7.1. Education after Marriage**

In Gilgit-Baltistan most of the people pursue education with full zeal and zest and it continues until education gets its ambition. In the same manner females of the region act smartly however it gets suffer in a rare occasions. It is already gathered from data that age at the time of marriage is very low. Most of the girls are already married when are have entered the university or in the progress of higher education. Before the marriage female side take the

promises from male side to fulfill her education however it is not guaranteed. It is came under observations of the researcher that in some cases education is either completely stopped or it is continued through intervals. One of the female respondents was asked about continuation of education after marriage was fulfilled or not, how did your marriage has affected your education, one of the respondents said that, however respondents expressions regarding her in-laws decision of her continuation of education was frustrating and while talking to researcher her voice was shaking.

Respondent said that

*‘Before marriage NOW my in-laws promised continuation of education and NOW my husband agreed too, what happened despite planning I got pregnant at that stage I had to leave education for the sake of family. It is regrettable and time would not pay it back.’*

Not all the promises are fulfilled in marriages plans change with change in circumstances. In this case promise is broken and researcher felt the pain in the voice of respondent. In this case desire for education is killed for the sake of marriage and family.

## **6.8 Real Spouse**

Real spouse is the one who are person is married. In the current marital relationship, all the traits that respondent idealized were asked, whether all

those traits and characteristics idealized exist in your spouse? Researcher found various responses from different people of different background. Some people despite of living decade long relationships responded in negative way. On the other side those who ran into marriage by family arranged came with positive responses.

Respondents reported various answers to question. One of the respondents, when asked question, Does your spouse possess traits you idealized? He added to this experience as,

*“Well, we had 10 years long relationship. I used to think of her as intelligent person. In term her of education she used to show great outcomes out of her career. Those were traits I wanted to see most. She does not have those traits which idealized. Women are difficult to understand. When we were in relationship, her behavior was good now behavior is got worse.”*

Respondent reports that spouse does not possess idealized traits. Despite of ten years long relationship respondent realizes her spouse does not have traits. Spouse’s intellectual level and behavior are not what respondent expected. Although ten years of long relationship was enough to recognize one person but respondent remained unaware of those missing traits that respondent idealized. Some natures are hard to study because behavior of person varies with the change in social and psychological conditions.

Most of the male respondents’ opinion after marriage was expressed in a negative way. They now think that nature of women changes like weather and

it can be changed at any time. Most of the respondents said that their marital relationship could be better.

Another respondent said,

*“My respondent responded with a gentle smile on his face, I still could get a better spouse. It could be better. Physical appearance and education is not what I expected.”*

This male respondent also reported that his spouse does not have idealized traits. Most of the marriages are arranged by family and both individuals who did not know each other before marriage. In such a situation most people do not know whether spouse possess have certain traits that individual idealize before marriage. One of the female respondents said,

*“My spouse possesses traits I idealized before marriage. I wanted to marry someone who is supportive, loyal and caring. He supports me in my studies and other family affairs.”*

This female respondent who had family arranged marriage reports positive response about real spouse and traits she wanted to see traits before marriage. In the research it is found that most of the female respondents wants traits that are psychological not a worldly demands as men do. For example male respondents demanded traits that are worldly like physical appearance and education however like female respondents demanded psychological that male person can himself develop through hard work and passion.

Like young people around the world young people of Gilgit-Baltistan also possess traits they want to see in their spouses. In the mean-time real spouse traits also inquired from respondents. Respondents reported both real and ideal spouse selection. Before the marriage all the respondents had ideal spouse selection criteria in their minds but ended up somewhere else who is real spouse.

### **6.9. Partner compatibility**

Partner compatibility is how much both male and female partners can have similar characteristics either that are physical and psychological. Partner compatibility can be in their physical appearances or education and in their level of maturity. Partner compatibility is one of the major traits that both genders seek in their respective partners. According to Gulzar and Hussain (2015) said both men and women idealize psycho-social preferences in the mate selection process. Compatibility of partner can be social and psychological. Psychological and social well-being matching traits determine compatibility. In the study Parsiae and Refahi found that female idealize psychological state, morality and socio-economic status while male prefer spouse with psychological state, morality and physical appearance. Search of traits that complete one another are major importance that brings compatibility among partners. To bring the compatibility both male and female prefer psychological traits in the literature studied that Lily (2020) found out that men value honesty, obedience, kindness and caring while female valued honesty, responsibility and caring. These are the characteristics that both male and female look in spouse to bring compatibility.

One of the respondents said,

*'Compatibility is most important factor that can be brought through a psychological matching with the spouse. Without compatibility future of marriage is very dangerous'.*

In the societies like Gilgit-Baltistan, most of the marriages are carried out through arranged marriage. Before marriage families from both male and female sides psychological matching is not even considered yet most of the couples after marriage shown great level of bond in their marriage. One of the respondents reported that,

*'Since our marriage there have not been any compatibility issues. Economically there is no problem at all. We both like each other is no psychological compatibility issues faced so far.'*

Compatibility between husband and wife is considered as first step towards happy and successful marriage. It is great moment for two people but also for whole family and healthys for future generation they will procreate in near future. If there comes no economic and psychological compatibility issue than, there is strong bond between two People. This strong bond is healthy for all family and people strongly associated with it.

Compatibility can be increased between two people i.e. husband and wife. Through the process sharing and consultation with one another compatibility can be enhanced. In this same case, if two persons of immediate partners stop sharing their life events with each other there come a compatibility issues. Respondent reported in this way,



*'Mostly I take decisions and family opinion matters. We often consult each other but most of decisions come from me. In few matters where if spouse is completely unaware of situations than there is no need to consult spouse because it is useless, because her opinion would not help. If my role in situation is active I consult with spouse if it is passive I do not consult.'*

In this case respondent try to neutralize situation however according to him most of the decisions come from him and often consults. To some extend this can be said rational decision in some events if wife is not aware of events that come along than person should share but he does not consult. Sharing of idea can only strengthen their marital relationship. when respondents were asked about imbalances while performing roles in everyday life. As all of the respondents were newly wedded, few respondent told they have not experienced any imbalance out of marriage. In the process of spouse selection both males and females face various barriers. Geographical distribution of Gilgit-Baltistan informs demography of person. It is distributed in regions and each region is recognized with its own sect and culture. Most of the barriers and challenges are sectarian and cultural. Among fifteen respondents only three said that sect does not matter. Thirteen respondents reported that marrying outside sect is not allowed. Inter-regional marriages are also rare in Gilgit-Baltistan. There are three regions in GB Gilgit, Diamer and Baltistan region. Marriages within these three regions are very rare, although sectarian compatibility exist. Even existence of sectarian and religious compatibility hurdles marriage. Where there is not sectarian barrier, there comes cultural barrier. Due to cultural variation among three regions marriages are very rare. Even Over the last three decades sectarian conflicts occurred multiple times and thousands of people died as result of sectarian violence. Those respondents who had same roles like having jobs narrated that they are not having issues performing their roles. On the other hand, who had difference in roles, few of respondents who had jobs and their spouses did not have jobs said they are

having problem in balancing life. Females narrated that it is difficult for them manage household affairs.

**CHAPTER NO. 7**

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

## **7.1 Discussion**

It is universal phenomenon that everyone ties knot of marriage in his or her life. Getting into the marriage through a procedure is quite different across the world. Different societies have their own ways of choosing spouse and perform in their own particular way. In the same manner people of Gilgit-Baltistan have their own way of choosing spouse. As the literature was explored further, it was found that before selecting spouse both male and female idealize spouse and related traits. Marriage is legally, culturally, socially sanctioned union between two persons, who are can make family of their own. It is union of two people known as spouse. Since the advent of human life on planet, spouse selection has been most important event. Marriage affects many aspects of life including physical health and longevity, mental health and happiness and economic well-being. Respondents agreed to the idealized spouse and traits of their spouse. This research was carried out in Gilgit-Baltistan. Responses enabled the researcher to identify the ideal and real spouse selection criteria. Both male and female respondents came up with their own ideal spouse selection criteria, which they idealized before marriage. For male respondents physical appearance was highest priority and for female personality and future perspective was highest priority. In Gilgit-Baltistan most of the people pursue education with full zeal and zest and it continues until education gets its ambition. In the same manner females of the region act smartly however it gets suffer in a rare occasions. It is already gathered from data that age at the time of marriage is very low. Most of the girls are already married when are have entered the university or in the progress of higher

education. Before the marriage female side take the promises from male side to fulfill her education however it is not guaranteed. It is came under observations of the researcher that in some cases education is either completely stopped or it is continued through intervals. One of the female respondents was asked about continuation of education after marriage was fulfilled or not, how did your marriage has affected your education, one of the respondents said that, however respondents expressions regarding her in-laws decision of her continuation of education was frustrating and while talking to researcher her voice was shaking.

These standards are imaginary set up criteria. On the other hand, question of did they end up obtaining such a traits in their spouse. Out of fifteen respondents, thirteen respondents reported that their current spouse do not possess criteria they idealized before marriage. Spouse selection is universal phenomenon and in every culture, they have their own patterns of choosing spouse. It is natural phenomenon that people want to marry someone who is perfect in many aspects of life. This yearning leads us to aspire specific traits in our mind. However, people usually end up in somewhere else. Gap was found while studying about topic selection of spouse. As the literature was studied from around the around to gain maximum knowledge possible to familiarize as much as possible. As we have studied in literature review that different societies have criterion about spouse selection and difference in approach in traits is found. Choosing spouse is universal phenomenon studied universally under the shadow of various fields. Different traits around the

world are being aspired by young people that they really want to see in their spouses. If we look at the world we see people have their own ideal spouse selection criteria. In the world people usually focus on culture, education, caste, religion, race, age and other cultural factors. It varies on the basis of gender. Female aspire to see more economically stabled man while male idealize physical appearance of female. Spouse selection is cultural process so it varies around the world. Most of the people aim to get into marriage with such a person who's social and economic status matches. Usually such a people do not settle on less than those standards that they possess. Such a standards can either ascribed as family status in society or achieved status like economic status. In the same manner people of Gilgit-Baltistan also idealize specific traits in their spouse. Around the world female idealize economic well-being of spouse while in Gilgit-Baltistan female aspire to see their spouse supportive, honesty and caring. While among male physical appearance is common. Although people do select their spouse, real question was that, do people end up marrying their ideal spouse. Everyone is going to get married one day. Person proposes specific traits in his/her spouse to be. While doing spouse selection person idealized specific traits. It is found out in geographically reviewed literature that geographically people have different criteria of spouse selection. It varies from one culture to another that is reason why spouse selection criteria varies around the world. One of the mysteries remained unknown in literature is that, do the people end up meeting idealized spouse. To leave a successful and happy generation we should make planning for them in a positive way. In-depth interviews were taken online. Selection of

ideal mate is confusing process in the life of most people. Both men and women possess ideal spouse selection. Men idealized physical attractiveness, education and social status of girl. On the other hand, female respondents idealized caring, supportive and honesty. Barrier in spouse selection is sect and no family and caste barrier reported. Both male and female are not fully independent in choosing spouse. In the preferences, economic status while social status of spouse is emphasized by both male and female respondents. Therefore, this study was designed to find out the ideal and real spouse selection among youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. The study shows that both male and female respondents possess ideal spouse selection criteria. Male respondents preferred spouse who is good looking in physical appearance and educated while female respondents preferred honesty, loyalty and supportive. Ten respondents reported that their spouse does not possess criteria they idealized before marriage. Five respondents reported their spouse possess traits they idealized before marriage. The matching hypothesis theory and filter theory were used in this study. The researcher found out that respondents were educated most them were graduated and few were holding job and rest of respondents were enrolled in post-graduation studies. Female respondents were either doing jobs or housewives.

Decisional authorities are in the hands of parents and are fully independent in choosing spouse among females. Among males although they are independent in choosing spouse decisions were taken with consultation with parents. There were socio-economic factors reported from respondents, although there were no economic factors were found in both male and female respondents however

there were social factors which play significant role in spouse selection. Respondents reported that their spouse should have good family background. All of the respondents emphasized social status of spouse. Male respondents said, after marriage her spouse is part of life and her economic background does not matter. For them social status of spouse's family is important because it shows reputation of family in society. High social status means high respect and honor for the family. Gilgit-Baltistan is classless society people attached culturally and big families and casts do not exist, that is why marrying out of family and caste in no problem for most of the respondents. The barrier most of the respondents both male and female respondents reported is that sect is major barrier in the way of choosing spouse. Only two respondents reported where sect is not problem for them while thirteen respondents said sect is problem for them. Only segregation exists in Gilgit-Baltistan is sectarian segregation. There are three major sects Shia, Sunni and Imamia-Isma'ilia. There are very few marriages among these sects. Marrying from different sect within Gilgit-Baltistan is very rare. People are connected and have relations on the basis of sect. Most of the interactions occur in terms of family relations are on the basis of sect. researcher inquired about real spouse. Ten respondents reported that their spouse does not possess traits that they idealized before marriage. Five respondents reported that their spouse possess traits before marriage.

People around the world idealize various traits that they want to see their spouse. Among those traits most of the traits were common but attributes of those traits are different around the world. Some attributes in Africa are



considered as attractive while same attributes in Europe are considered as ugly. In the same manner some traits are considered least important in East Asia but are most traits in middle-east. For instance, religiosity is an important trait in middle-east while not important in East Asia. Similarly, in Gilgit-Baltistan people idealize specific traits that they really want to see in their spouse. Those criteria are not completely different from those around the world but some of the attributes vary around the world. For instance physical appearance varies from that of the rest of the world.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

The results show that there were several important ideal spouse selection criteria among youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. The obtained results found in the research were not different from that we studied in the literature. Respondents idealized slightly different preferences. This difference was due to the different culture of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Male respondents preferred physical appearance and education of spouse. There were other traits like family background and sense of dress among females. Respondents reported various responses to the decisional authority in their families. One respondent was completely independent in choosing spouse while five respondents said decision is taken with consent to family. Two respondents said their parents decided his spouse. On the preferences of socio-economic status of the spouse, respondents reported no issue on the economic status of spouse and social status of spouse had significant importance in the spouse selection process. Respondents reported family reputation and respect

as social status of family. Seven male respondents reported sect as hurdle in the way of spouse selection while one male respondent said sect is no barrier in the way of spouse selection. Identifying real spouse selection six male respondents reported that their spouses do not possess criteria they idealized before marriage. Two respondents said their spouse is ideal as they expected.

Seven female respondents were included from Gilgit-Baltistan. Female respondents have idealized honesty, caring and supportive prospects of spouse. Other traits they wanted to see in their spouse are respect and good personality. Six female respondents reported decisional authority in the spouse selection was in the hands of parents. In this scenario respondent was in relationship with girl who belonged to another sect. They both wanted to marry but families did not approved this marital bond that both wanted to form. It is not big deal marrying outside family and caste but sect and religion are biggest barriers in the way of spouse selection. One respondent who married within his caste and sect said it is not big deal marrying outside sect and family. One respondent said final decisional authority was in her own hands. She was independent in choosing spouse. Like male respondents, barrier in the way of spouse selection was sect and there were no reported family and caste issues in spouse selection process. Out of seven respondents, four respondents preferred economic status of spouse along with social status. While, three respondents, reported and emphasized social status of spouse is important for them. Three said their spouse have all the criteria they idealized before marriage while four respondents reported their marriage could be better. If we give holistic view to this research we come to this point that both

male and female respondents had ideal traits in their mind with whom they want to tie their marriage knot. If we find ideal traits in someone can have and make strong bond in their marriage. Thus such marriages can be successful and prosperous. This prosperous marriages lead to great off-springs as a result can have a happy generation. As the marriage is important institution of family. Everyone is going to get married one day. Person proposes specific traits in his/her spouse to be. While doing spouse selection person idealized specific traits. It is found out in geographically reviewed literature that geographically people have different criteria of spouse selection. It varies from one culture to another that is reason why spouse selection criteria varies around the world. One of the mysteries remained unknown in literature is that, do the people end up meeting idealized spouse. To leave a successful and happy generation we should make planning for them in a positive way. In-depth interviews were taken online. Selection of ideal mate is confusing process in the life of most people. Both men and women possess ideal spouse selection. Men idealized physical attractiveness, education and social status of girl. On the other hand, female respondents idealized caring, supportive and honesty. Barrier in spouse selection is sect and no family and caste barrier reported. Both male and female are not fully independent in choosing spouse. In the preferences, economic status while social status of spouse is emphasized by both male and female respondents. Out of 15 respondents, 10 respondents reported their spouses do not possess ideal traits that they idealized while 5 respondents were satisfied. Women in GB are educated and empowered women and yet cultural constraints exist. As spouse selection is cultural

process. They have equipped themselves with power of knowledge and skills, as they say, knowledge is power. As young females propose their own criteria it means that they possess criteria and idealize their life partner. They make their own choice in lives. It has been observed from data that females like to choose life partner who is caring and supportive. Women deem to have supportive and caring husband because place for hardworking women in society is challenging. Women who pursue careers want life partner who is supportive and caring. Supportive is one who helps them to achieve her careers and stand beside with them in difficult times. As most of the women idealized caring, loyal and supportive husband, it orients the ideas that women in GB are career oriented and achieve their ambitions with their life partners. There are three outcomes of decisional authority in spouse selection authority. Firstly, out of eight respondents, four male respondents choosing spouse was their own decision but not independently. This decision was taken with consent to their families. In such situations, respondents said they gave final call. While two respondents said marital decision is on taken on consent with family and parents. In such cases parents give final call It is great moment for two people but also for whole family and healthy for future generation they will procreate in near future. If there comes no economic and psychological compatibility issue than, there is strong bond between two People. This strong bond is healthy for all family and people strongly associated with it

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## **APPENDIX**

## Real and ideal spouse selection criteria among Gilgit-Baltistan youth

### Interview Guide

#### Demographic profile

Age -----

District-----

Marital status-----

family size-----

Income-----

1. What do you think who is ideal spouse?
2. What are traits you want most to see in your spouse?
3. What was your ideal spouse criteria before marriage?
4. How would you explain traits you just mentioned?
5. Was your marriage self-arranged(love marriage) or family arranged marriage?
6. Who has more authority regarding your spouse selection in your family?

7. Did you possess authority to propose your own spouse selection criteria? If yes, what are factors which make you decide independently?  
If no, who gives a final decision if your family?
8. How did you weigh yourself before idealizing specific traits about your spouse?
9. How do you see marrying out of family, caste, sect, culture and region?
10. How did you see marrying below your socio-economic status?
11. At what age did you get into marital relationship?
12. What was age gap you considered? Is age gap important?
13. What was your spouse's education before marriage? What is her qualification now?
14. Do you feel incompatibility with your spouse like social, psychological and economical?
15. What were the hurdles you faced in marrying outside GB culture? Reasons?
16. Does your partner consider your opinion in decision making regarding family affairs? Do you consult each other?
17. How your marital relationship has affected your life?

18. What are the factors which bring happiness and distress in your marital life?
  
19. Do the social roles create imbalance between you and your spouse?
  
20. Did you or your spouse promised fulfillment of any desire or ambition after marriage?
  
21. What was your education before your marriage and what is your education status now?
  
22. Does your spouse possess the traits you aspired to see in your spouse?
  
23. Is your spouse supportive? What are your expectations?