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### Between Tradition and Modernity: Analyzing the Impact of Globalization and Cultural Hybridization on Wedding Ceremonies in District Dir Upper

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Original Article

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#### Keywords

Marriage rituals, Cultural hybridization, wedding culture, dominant culture, threat, identity

#### Abstract

*At global level, marriage is an important part of society's life and culture and is celebrated uniquely in every region, ethnicity, and nations. Nowadays, due to multiple global reasons, weddings are not celebrated in their pure cultural style and usually loses its originality due to the influence of the dominant culture or long-term interaction with another culture under the process of globalization. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the impact of western culture on Pakistani conventional wedding and its related ceremonies. There have been gradual changes in the marriage ceremonies at all regions of the country resulting in unique hybrid model. The study was framed under the umbrella of cultural hybridisation theory to develop a broader framework for developing study tools and obtaining relevant information. The study was quantitative in nature and closed-ended questionnaire was developed and used as a tool for data collection. Questionnaire are disseminated among the conveniently selected sample of 120 respondents from three different tehsils including Dir, Wari and Barawal, while all respondents were educated. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively and presented under different tables. The findings illustrate that during the previous decade, significant changes have been witnessed in the wedding ceremonies of Pakistan, mostly resulting from globalization and hybridization. Due to hybridization, the conventional local marriage practices and rituals have been replaced, accepted and promoted. The previous wedding ceremonies have lost its purity and originality and thus cultural hybridisation theory was found relevant to the study.*

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#### Introduction

The ideology of Pakistan is based on the name of Islam, and it provides knowledge and guidance to its followers regarding each aspect of their lives. As a follower of Islam, Muslims have to follow the religious obligations in every aspect of their lives, and our cultural values are also based on our spiritual beliefs. Wedding is an integral part of any culture; hence, our wedding ceremonies are based on religious beliefs, such as Nikkah and Walima, which are compulsory rituals of Pakistani Islamic weddings (Manan, 2014). Unfortunately, marriage ceremonies in Pakistan are not governed by Islamic rules at present and several changes have been observed in recent decades. In Islam,

fulfilling a religious obligation involves reciting Nikkah and arranging the ceremonies of Barat and Walima under the lofty and permissible principles of Islam. However, it now includes unnecessary events, such as Dholaki, Mehndi, the Bridal shower, and dance parties are organized as part of the festivities from the past few years (Bibi, Mahmood & Rizwan, 2020).

Some of the events celebrated at marriage ceremonies has been adopted from the Indian and western culture. The reason for this influence and adoption is the coexistence of Muslims and Hindus in the subcontinent, which makes Indian marriage ceremonies such as Dholaki, Sangeet, Mehndi, and Haldi part of Pakistani marriages. Some Indian wedding cultural practices have now become a significant and compulsory part of Pakistani weddings (Bibi, Mahmood, & Rizwan, 2020). It has not been the influence of Indian Culture alone, but also Pakistani marriages are highly influenced by Western wedding traditions (Rana, & Chishti, 2019). The trend of having a bridal shower and bachelor's dance party in recent years has become a prominent part of Pakistani weddings. They are adopted from American culture because they were not part of Pakistani weddings in the past. Consequently, the influence of other cultures has modified Pakistani wedding culture, resulting in a loss of its cultural identity from previous times (Qamar, Zia, & Khan, 2019). Hence, to revive our Pakistani wedding culture, we must take a comprehensive look at the outside influences affecting it (Sadique, Bukhari, & Arif, 2024).

The creation of culture by humans is perfectly natural, but it is not a biological entity. Similarly, culture is not given to the people by their environment. It is also not the manifestation of mental hard work. It is a human artefact and byproduct of human choices and acts. A particular society shares values, beliefs, and norms according to its social requirements. There are several elements of culture, as discussed by Mibang and Behera (2006), but marriage is considered a fundamental element of a particular culture. It is an accepted form of union between a man and a woman. We call it a process of social recognition for the bride and groom as husband and wife, and the mental preparation of the bride for her new status and role as a wife and daughter-in-law. Mibang and Behera (2006) argue that each culture differs in its marriage practices and rituals, which are influenced by religion, social, and cultural values and beliefs. The sphere of selecting a spouse is culturally determined and celebrated in accordance to the established norms of society (Zaidi, & Shuraydi, 2002).

Weddings and its related ceremonies are viewed as a very special events, held with great enthusiasm in every country. Each country has its own unique wedding culture, which includes wedding costumes, music, food, and decorations. However, this variety of cultures is slowly disappearing, and we are witnessing enormous shifts in them. Shoukat (2016) in his study found the rapid changes in wedding dress (fabric, texture, colour, and style), especially in brides' dress to look beautiful and unique. Therefore, they chose the different and uncommon colours for their dresses at marriage (Marlow, 2021). It has been revealed that very few people want to stick to their traditional and cultural attire and the new generation prefer stylish wedding costumes, taking influence from other countries and cultures due to globalization and cultural exchanges (Zaman, 2014). Wedding and marriage related traditions are unique and treated as sacred, however, the passage of time has changed these ceremonies and diminished its cultural uniqueness (Naz, Sheikh, & Khan, 2015).

The focus of the present research study is to thoroughly investigate the influence of Western wedding traditions upon the different rituals of Pakistani marriage ceremonies. It focuses on the cultural practices in Pakistani weddings that were not part of them in the past, however, the western wedding rituals and customs have become part of Pakistani weddings over time. It seems that they are now a fundamental and unavoidable component of Pakistani marriages and wedding ceremonies are recognized as unfinished and flawed without them. Nevertheless, there are two significant occasions in Pakistani Islamic marriages that include Nikkah and Walima within the Islamic framework, however, numerous other components have been imported and incorporated into the wedding ceremonies (Yasmin, Naseem, & Sohail, 2019). In this regard, several rituals have

been disappeared in the marriage institution and this affects it because Pakistani culture has assimilated from other cultures for various reasons. This research, thus investigate the influence of Western marriages on Pakistani marriages and its related rituals including nikah, walima, barat, bridal and bridegroom dress and invitation process of guests.

### Theoretical framework

Cultural hybridisation is a multifarious concept (Bhabha, 1994; Ryoo, 2009) and has multiple meanings and explanations. In general terms, cultural hybridisation refers to the amalgamation of one culture with another, thus resulting in a different cultural blend and taste. Cultural hybridity is a post-colonial emergence that developed as a reaction to cultural hegemony (Kwok-Bun & Peverelli, 2010). During colonial times, people accepted and practised the influence of colonial culture in their lives. Cultural hybridisation is seen as a phenomenon where the dominant culture influences one culture, and elements of that culture is integrated into its own, resulting in a modified culture. This phenomenon also occurs when people live in another culture for an extended period and gradually adopt these traits. These influences are found in religious festivals, rituals, ceremonies, food, and dresses, mostly from a dominant perspective (Pieterse, 2018). In this context, wedding-related ceremonies in Pakistan are integrating new trends and rituals into a hybrid model, including mehndi/Rasm-e-Hina, barat, dress, waleema, and Nikah. Likewise, due to constant interaction with different cultures, hybridisation continuously grows, and cultural traits from one part of the world are transmitted and integrated into the culture of the other part. The cultural hybridisation theory was most appropriate for understanding how the influence of other dominant cultures penetrates Pakistani culture, particularly in wedding ceremonies and celebrations.

### Methodology

This research was particularly related to the influence of globalization on the weeding ceremonies in Pakistan. The study broadly investigates the different factors leading to the development of unique hybrid culture across societies including Pakistan. The study was quantitative in nature and primary data was collected from a sample of 120 respondents from different selected from different segments of society. The sample was taken from three conveniently selected tehsils including Dir, Barawal and Wari of Dir Upper, using non-probability techniques. At first a survey was conducted and 120 families were identified from the three selected tehsils and were accessed for data collection who underwent a marriage ceremony in their families during the past three years. From each tehsil 40 respondents were selected to collect comprehensive data, while all the respondents were educated as per study nature and objectives. A close-ended questionnaires were used to collect the desired information and obtain quick replies (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). The collected data was analyzed manually under different tables to generate study findings and conclusion.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Participants' Beliefs About Marriage as an Important Aspect of Culture**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	113	94.2%
No	4	3.3%
Maybe	3	2.5%
Total	120	100%

The first question asked of the participants was whether marriage is an important aspect of one's culture. According to 94.2% of participants, marriage is an important aspect of cultural practices, as shown in Table 1. At the same time, a tiny percentage was unsure whether it was part of the culture. This signposts that marriage is an important part of the culture.

**Table 2: Participants' Opinions on Performing Marriages in Pure Cultural/Traditional Style**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	78	65.0%
No	22	18.3%
Maybe	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%

When the participants were asked about whether marriage should be performed in its pure traditional style. 65% were in favour of performing marriages in its pure cultural style, as shown in Table 2. At the same time, 18.3% were not in favour of this. At the same time, 16.7% were not sure about it. A significant percentage indicates that people still believe marriages should be conducted in their traditional cultural style.

**Table 3: Participants' Views on Cultural Purity of Pakistani Marriages**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	12	10.0%
No	88	73.3%
Maybe	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%

The participants were asked whether Pakistani marriages these days are performed in their pure cultural style. 73.3% responded no, as shown in Table 3. A large percentage were certain that Pakistani marriages, these days, are not performed in their pure traditional style. At the same time, 16.7% were not sure about it. Only 10% percent believed that Pakistani marriages are performed in their pure cultural style. It signals that other cultural practices have influenced our own wedding culture for various reasons.

**Table 4: Participants' Beliefs About Pakistani Marriages Including Only Nikah and Walima (As per Shariah Law)**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	97	80.8%
No	12	6.7%
Maybe	11	12.5%
Total	120	100%

The statistics in Table 4 show that a significant proportion (80.8%) of the total respondents feel that Pakistani marriages must involve only Nikah and Walima, according to the law of Shariah. At the same time, 12.5% were indifferent, and a small percentage (6.7%) disagreed. This means that most of the people interviewed are in favour of the marriages being done in the purely Islamic style, the focus being on observing the religious and cultural principles in the wedding practice in Pakistan.

**Table 5: Participants' View on Western Influence in Pakistani Wedding Culture**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	100	83.3%
No	9	7.5%
Maybe	11	9.2%
Total	120	100%

To check whether the West has influenced Pakistani wedding traditions, participants were asked the question. 83.3% agreed with the statement that Western culture influences Pakistani wedding

ceremonies, as shown in Table 5. Whereas, 9.2% were not sure about it. Nowadays, Western ideologies and traditions are becoming part of Pakistan, gradually. They are affecting our cultural style through various modes. The large percentage indicates this.

**Table 6: Participants' Opinions on Western Influence on Pakistani Wedding Traditions**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	100	83.3%
No	9	7.5%
Maybe	11	9.2%
Total	120	100%

The participants were asked about the wedding ceremonies that are now part of Pakistani weddings. Table 6 shows that 77.5% of respondents believe Pakistani weddings include ceremonies such as engagement, bridal shower, mehndi, Nikkah, and Walima as essential events. Whereas, 17.5% answered that it only includes Mehndi, Nikkah, and Walima. While a few per cent responded to other options. It indicates that diverse ethnic practices of other Western nations have now become a part of Pakistani traditions. Engagements and bridal showers are not the cultural ethnic practices of Pakistan, but this large percentage signifies that now these events are also celebrated in Pakistan.

**Table 7: Participants' Observations of the Most Frequently Occurring Events in Pakistani Weddings**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Bridal Shower and Engagements	86	71.7%
Bachelor Party	3	2.5%
Both	27	22.5%
None	4	3.3%
Total	120	100%

The above question aimed to know which Western event most frequently occurred in Pakistani wedding ceremonies. Table 7 shows that 71.7% had gone to the bridal shower and engagements. At the same time, 22.5% agreed that bridal showers, engagement parties, and bachelor parties are now all part of Pakistani weddings. This percentage is an indicator that Western ideologies are now shaping our Pakistani traditional weddings in their colour and customs.

**Table 8: Participants' Views on Engagements Replacing the Traditional Dua-e-Khair**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
True	87	72.5%
False	6	5.0%
Maybe	27	22.5%
Total	120	100%

Dua-e-Khair is a pure traditional wedding event that takes place when the marriage is fixed between the bride and groom. It is not as official as Nikkah, but it is held to proceed with the events with the blessings of elders in the light of Islamic principles. The question posed above includes whether Dua-e-Khair is replaced by the engagement between the bride and groom, marked by the exchange of rings. 72.5% of participants responded that these kinds of engagements are prevailing these days and replacing Dua-e-Khair as shown in Table 8. At the same time, 22.5% were not sure about it. This large percentage indicates Western influence on Pakistani cultural wedding practices.

These new kinds of events are now becoming part of Pakistani wedding ceremonies and disturbing the cultural pattern of our traditional weddings.

**Table 9: Participants' Views on the Modern Exchange of Rings Between Bride and Groom**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	91	75.8%
No	6	5.0%
Maybe	23	19.2%
Total	120	100%

The above question aimed to explore whether modern Western-style engagements have replaced traditional-style engagements. A kind of engagement in which the bride and groom exchange rings, instead of the groom's mother, who puts a ring on the bride's finger by herself. 75.8% responded that nowadays rings are exchanged between the bride and groom rather than the old traditional style as portrayed in Table 9. At the same time, 19.2% were not sure about it. This large percentage indicates that modern Western engagements are now prevailing in Pakistan, as opposed to the traditional style where the groom's mothers place the rings on the bride's fingers and establish the relationship.

**Table 10: Participants' Views on Preference for Grand Marquees and Hotels Over Traditional Venues**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	109	90.8%
No	1	0.9%
Maybe	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Marriages in the past were performed in the homes and mosques following the traditional style. For the Nikkah ceremony, people mostly prefer mosques. They performed it simply in the mosques by following the Sharia laws. The Walima ceremony was performed in the home by inviting relatives, neighbours, friends, etc. Nowadays, trends have changed, making marquees an essential component of wedding ceremonies. Most people preferred marquee use, as shown in Table 10, 90.8% believe it is common at weddings today. At the same time, 8.3% percent of participants were not sure about it.

**Table 11: Participants' Views on Preference for Theme Weddings Over Traditional Style Weddings**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	84	70.0%
No	11	9.2%
Maybe	25	20.8%
Total	120	100%

The respondents were asked whether Pakistani people preferred themed weddings or traditional weddings. Themes weddings are part of the West, which is now seen in Pakistani weddings too, as 70% of respondents confirmed that themed weddings are now preferred in Pakistan over traditional weddings, as shown in Table 11. 20.8% were not sure about it. A tiny percentage, i.e., 9.2%, disagreed with the preference for themed weddings in Pakistan. This large percentage portends

that Western cultural practices are now amalgamated with Pakistani cultural events, resulting in cultural hybridisation.

**Table 12: Participants' Views on the Use of Music and Songs Instead of Naat and Tilawat in Pakistani Weddings**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	111	93.3%
No	3	2.5%
Maybe	5	4.2%
Total	119	100%

Previously, in Pakistani Islamic cultural weddings, people preferred to play the Tilawat of the Holy Quran and Naat. So, the bride and groom get blessed and continue their new journey in the light of Islamic principles. Nowadays, when the bride and groom enter the hall, songs are played. They are welcomed with the music. 93.3% people believed that nowadays music is used to welcome the bride and groom on their entrance into the wedding hall. This large percentage indicates that Western principles have strongly influenced our wedding culture and shaped it in their own way.

**Table 13: Participants' Views on Replacement of Traditional Sweets with Cakes in Mehndi (Rasm-e-Hina) Ceremonies**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	80	66.7%
No	20	16.7%
Maybe	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%

Gulab Jaman, laddu, kalakand, barfi, etc. These are all the traditional wedding sweets of Pakistan. Moreover, Rasm-e-Hina is the most celebrated wedding event in Pakistan since the partition. In Rasm-e-Hina, people order these traditional wedding sweets, which add charm to Pakistani weddings. Now, the new trend of cake cutting on Rasm-e-Hina has become a part of Pakistani weddings in some areas. Nowadays, cakes are specially ordered before Rasm-e-Hina. Descriptive statistics indicate that 66.7% believe people nowadays prefer cutting cakes on Rasm-e-Hina rather than using traditional sweets. At the same time, 16.7% disagreed with this statement. Moreover, 16.7% were not sure about it.

**Table 14: Participants' Views on the Use of English Quotes and Addresses in Pakistani Wedding Invitations**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	79	65.8%
No	13	10.8%
Maybe	28	23.3%
Total	120	100%

Language is also an essential part of one's culture. Therefore, language is used as a symbolic gesture in invitation cards to promote our culture. However, participants were asked whether Pakistani wedding invitation cards follow English quotes and addresses over Arabic verses and Urdu verses. In reply to this question, 65.8% of participants responded that English quotes and addresses are used rather than Arabic and Urdu verses. However, 23.3% were not sure about it. A tiny percentage of 10.8% disagreed with the above statement. Using the English language in

wedding invitations indicates that Western cultural ideologies and traditions are now having an impact on Pakistani wedding events.

**Table 14: Participants' Views on the Use of English Quotes and Addresses in Pakistani Wedding Invitations**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	79	65.8%
No	13	10.8%
Maybe	28	23.3%
Total	120	100%

In Pakistani weddings, people mostly prefer red flowers for decorations, as red flowers are symbolic of love, happiness, and prosperity. However, nowadays this practice has also changed due to a recent trend. In the West, people use white flowers to decorate churches because they symbolise a happy and prosperous life. 43.3% of Pakistani respondents believed that nowadays people are using white flowers for wedding decorations. Whereas 31.7% disagreed with the above-mentioned statement. 25% were not sure about it.

**Table 16: Participants' Views on the Preferred Wedding Dress Color for Pakistani Brides**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Red	59	49.2%
White	13	10.8%
Other than Red and White	48	40.0%
Total	120	100%

The red dress is the traditional symbolic colour for Pakistani brides. In the past, brides only wore red dresses at their Nikkah ceremony. Nowadays, Pakistani brides under the influence of the West prefer white dresses on their Nikkah and other than white. 49.2% of participants in the above statement responded that Pakistani brides still prefer wearing red dresses on their Nikkah ceremonies. 40% believed that brides wear put-on clothes other than white and red. Whereas, only 10.8% of participants believed that brides preferred wearing white dresses on their Nikkah ceremony. This signals that brides are still following their traditional wedding dress of red colour

**Table 17: Participants' Views on Whether Friends and Sisters of Pakistani Brides Follow the Same Dress Code Like Western Brides**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	54	45.0%
No	29	24.2%
Maybe	37	30.8%
Total	120	100%

In the West, it is their tradition that during the time of marriage, all the friends and sisters of the bride dress alike. This trend is also seen in some areas of Pakistan nowadays. It is indicated that 45% of participants responded in favour of the above statement. Whereas, 30.8% were not sure about it. However, 24.2% disagreed with the above-mentioned statement. Many respondents believe that trends are changing these days. Friends and sisters dress alike in weddings in the name of themed weddings. It marks that Western traditional cultural practices, now, collide with the Pakistani wedding ideologies, and change the cultural pattern of wedding ceremonies, being performed in Pakistan.

**Table 18: Participants' Views on the Shift from Traditional to Western Wedding Attire in Pakistan**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	79	65.8%
No	12	10.0%
Maybe	29	24.2%
Total	120	100%

Traditional wedding attire is an asset of Pakistani culture. Pakistan is a diverse country with multiple ethnicities. Each ethnicity follows its cultural wedding attire on the wedding days. However, now, in this era of advancement, changes have also been made in wedding attire. People are now following Western wedding attire. 65.8% of people agreed that nowadays, people are following Western attire on wedding days. 24.2% were not sure about it. However, only 10% disagreed with the above-mentioned statement. It means that wedding attire, a part of cultural practice, is also changing due to the influence of the West.

**Table 19: Participants' Views on Whether Western Influence on Pakistani Weddings Results in Cultural Hybridization**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	92	76.7%
No	5	4.1%
Maybe	23	19.2%
Total	120	100%

The respondents were asked to consider all the above-mentioned statements and to reply whether Western influence on Pakistani wedding ceremonies results in cultural hybridisation. 76.7% responded in favour of cultural hybridisation. They believed that Western influence upon Pakistani wedding ceremonies results in cultural hybridisation. However, 19.2% were not sure about it.

**Table 20: Respondents Views on Whether Cultural Hybridization Threatens Pakistani Weddings, Cultural Values, and Traditions**

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	103	85.8%
No	5	4.2%
Maybe	12	10.0%
Total	120	100%

The last question asked of the respondents included whether this cultural hybridisation threatens Pakistani weddings, cultural values, and traditions. 85.8% responded that cultural hybridisation, the result of Western influence, threatens Pakistani weddings, cultural values, and traditions. However, 11.7% were not sure about it. This shows that cultural hybridisation, resulting from Western influence, hurts Pakistani cultural heritage and practices.

### Discussion

The research aims to observe and describe the influence of globalisation on Pakistani wedding culture, including wedding ceremonies, rituals, celebration venues, decoration materials and processes, invitation patterns, sweets distribution, and the wedding dresses currently used. The results demonstrated that Pakistani weddings are significantly influenced by Western wedding culture. This influence has led to the adoption of an imported cultural hybrid model, which has

eroded the uniqueness, original culture, and identity. As reflected in Sharia Law, Pakistani wedding ceremonies must include only Nikkah and Walima; however, enormous changes have been observed in the wedding culture of Pakistan. The Pakistanis are religious and straightforward people, but marriage is usually used for showing wealth and economic status to others, while music, songs, melodies and other rituals, usually condemned, are celebrated at the event of barat and upon the entry of the Bride and Groom. The so-called spiritual and religious aspect is forgotten, and the Western colour is overtly and covertly used in such celebrations, thus making the dominant culture occupy the weak cultures. Several other traits are also borrowed and practised from Western cultures, which are supported by religious and cultural values. Further, Pakistani weddings are found amalgamated with Indian culture too due to geographical proximity and the sharing of other cultural traits. Marriage ceremonies are not uniform across Pakistani cultures, and different regions celebrate them in various ways.

In terms of wedding invitations, Pakistani wedding invitations typically include religious blessings (Bismillah), Quranic verses (In the name of Allah), or Quranic ritual phrases. Pakistani people usually prefer the English language and quotes. Besides, wedding venues are also affected as commercial Shadi Halls are used instead of a home or a masjid. A large Pakistani community celebrates marriages in Shadi halls. Here, the dominant culture is promoted, accepted, and widely celebrated for commercial purposes, with material exhibitions and displays of status that blend cultural hybridisation. The bridal dress and wedding decorations remain unchanged, with the white wedding dress for the bridegroom recognised as a religious symbol, while brides often prefer bridal red dresses. Conclusively, the influence of globalisation on Pakistani wedding ceremonies has increased significantly, bringing about substantial changes in Pakistani wedding traditions. This influence on marriages would grow over time due to cultural diffusion and the excessive use of social media and other networks, which encourage and spread a hybrid cultural model, threatening local cultural practices and identity.

### **Conclusion**

The process of globalization and western cultural dominance had undoubtedly impacted on the conventional wedding ceremonies of Pakistan. The dominant western cultures have influenced local culture in wide range of arena including marriage ceremonies and practices. The ritual of nikah, walima, dresses, invitation, and barat have been influenced due to the impact of western culture and local traditional not only changed but almost replaced, and practiced across the country. This change has broadly occurred due to the interactions, media exposure and cultural diffusion. It found that the changes occurred poses broader social, economic and identity related challenges to the local cultural landscape and society. The change in wedding ceremonies have simultaneously produced changes in other aspects of society including exogamous marriages, late marriage, and promoted the concept of honeymoon, dowry and nuclear family and lifestyle in Pakistani society.

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