

**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT DRIVE HUSBANDS TOWARDS
EXTRAMARITAL RELATIONS - MEN'S PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore both primary & secondary causes and key social dynamics that lead husbands to involve in extramarital relations (EMR); however, it depicts men's perspective only. After the basic theme analysis, 49 initial codes derived from the contents that shaped into conceptual framework. These were further developed into 4 categories namely, Interpersonal (Domestic life rapport between husband & wife), Intrapersonal (husbands' internal characteristics & personality dimensions), Contextual (external factors) and Social/societal factors that have visible influence in shaping up a scenario that drive men to develop extramarital relations. This study paves the way for further research to see deep into rising trend of EMR in our society that is damaging our family architecture. Sequel to this research might expose more pertinent factors and/or refine identified causes of EMR. Besides, our academicians, psychologists, social scientists, family counsellors and policy makers may also examine the findings objectively to suggest ways & means to improve the situation back home. A subtle awareness campaign both in the form of media contents and syllabi may also be considered by civil society & intellectuals.

KEY WORDS

Extramarital, EMS, infidelity, husband

1. INTRODUCTION

Man-woman marital relations have always played a pivotal role in knitting social fiber in eastern society. With special reference to Pakistan, the whole society emerges from a single "home" that constitutes married couple with or without children. The strength of this single unit primarily depends upon emotional bonding and mental acceptability by husband & wife. The unit's individual intensity ultimately fortifies the whole societal web. As narrated by different respondents during an informal exploratory study, either due to natural evolutionary changes or general tendency to catch up western culture both by men and women, our social structure is losing its strength. Where "home" is losing its perceived "peace & tranquility" image; separations, divorces and domestic altercation are also on the rise.

By far, the most vocal comment to explain the above scenario is "husbands' growing desire to establish extramarital relations and keep it secret"(Scott, 1998; Wiederman and Allgeier, 1996; Treas and Giesen, 2000). Previous research on the subject reveals that

extramarital relation (EMR) has been identified as second most damaging factor to a peaceful marital life; physical abuse being No 1. (Whisman et al., 1997; Whisman and Pinto, 1997) , accordingly, a qualitative study was conducted using in-depth interviews with individual men to seek their perspective on the issue;

1.2 Objectives

Primary objective for this phase of the study is to identify and explore possible causes that drive husbands, from their perspective, to indulge in extramarital relations.

Secondary objective for the study is to further analyze the identified causes, as narrated by men, so that remedial measures may be suggested in follow-up studies. The analyses would enable various stakeholders to better understand the dynamics of marital life vis-à-vis family peace. This will also help the society to keep up the traditional social structure, close the loopholes and reduce aftermath damaging effects.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

A number of studies have been conducted on related topic but in lower stratum of the society in urban and rural settings of Pakistan. In situations where some of the family members, who have an opportunity to be alone at home, got involved in EMS, (Janjua et al., 2010). Empirical studies provide data on the correlation between Pre-Marital Sexual (PMS) involvement of men and EMS. There is a positive relationship between PMS and EMR, (Moran et al., 2003). The results indicate that men who had had experienced sex at a younger age (between 16 and 19 years of age) showed higher probability of indulging in EMR. Another study, Mexican men, Broughton (2008) investigated the behavior of men who were living away from home for a longer period of time, and reported that a vast majority (80%) of such men were involved in EMS.

Rice n noodles, 2012 postulates that men who get involved in EMS get bored by the monotony of same partner sex and look around for variety. They recommend that EMS for the reasons of variety seeking helps the married couple lead a happier married life. On the issue of reasons that keep men away from EMR, Investment Theory, (2003), theorizes that multiple reasons push married men away from EMS, namely Length of marriage, common possessions and number of children that the couple has. In a relationship between man & woman, sex is considered as an integral part in both the situations of deep warmth and incompatibility. Americans believe that sex is the critical factor for lasting period (Michael et al., 1994). Similar findings in (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Duncombe and Marsden, 1996). Generally, husbands desire their wives to be equally if not more, active, impulsive and initiator for and during sexual activity, impulsive. Many husbands expect their wives to be more interested in, and spontaneous about, sex. (Hochschild, 1983). In Asian societies marriages are always regarded as binding force to establish a home including father, mothers, siblings etc. Relationships with in-laws are more critical than with the husband to enjoy a happy married life (Dion and Dion, 1993)

To emphasize the sexual nature of contacts with persons other than a spouse, the term extramarital sex has been widely applied (Maykovich, 1976) Extramarital coitus (e.g. Bell et al., 1975; Johnson, 1970). Sexual expression may be partially predetermined or atleast influenced by preferences, genes or early socialization, but the key implication of choice theory is that sexual decision making primarily involves a cost/benefit assessment of the possible outcomes (Hadfield and Posner, 1992)

Male reproductive success requires maximizing the number of genes passed to the next generation; hence, men should seek to engage in sexual activity with as many fertile partners as possible and should hold permissive sexual attitude. Female reproductive success requires maximizing an offspring's chances of survival; women, then, should demonstrate less permissive sexual attitude and should confine the sexual activity to long-term relationships with committed partners who control many resources (e.g. Buss and Schmitt, 1993; Daly et al., 1982; Kenrick et al., 1990)

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study to ascertain factors that eventuate into males' involve in EMR. Scope of the study is limited to married males with professional exposure age range was 35 years to 65 years. A number of studies have been done on the subject but focusing the lower income strata of the society. It was felt by the research team that there exist a substantial number of professional men between the ages of 35 years and 65 years who get involved in EMR. The geographical boundary for this study was limited to the metropolitan Lahore. Epistemological guide was interpretivism, since the research is being done on human behavior and qualitative research will lend itself appropriately.

Selection of interview participants was made on following criteria:

- Married men of age 35-65 years with or without children who either themselves are in relations or witness to such affairs.
- On the basis of articulation, and willingness to participate
- Different educational level and socio-economic background within Lahore, Pakistan

To gain insight of the subject from the participants, phenomenological & grounded theory (LaRossa, 2005; Schwartz and Young, 2009; Thompson, 1983a) was used. The phenomenological influence was witnessed while inferring meaning from the expressions & themes from the participants were presented. Likewise Grounded theory influenced on the research for interviews, theory generation and data analyses. After the pilot discussions (n=4) and subsequent depth interview (n=14) completed, the research team gathered & organized all thoughts that were presented for a meaningful sum. Interviews of 14 participants were discontinued when research team realized that Theoretical Saturation has reached. Data collection method was semi-structured in-depth interviews with open-ended Questions (n=14). The interview guide was pre-tested using a pre-designed primary interview, some of the questions were rewritten, and other items were added to the interview. Snowball technique employed to explore further. Interviews were conducted in Urdu in order to capture the essence of emotions and feelings, associated with the area being investigated. Notes of the responses were later translated into English to be fed into NVivo. All men interviewed were not necessarily involved in EMR themselves. They either knew someone very close who was involved in EMR. Some participants responded based on their observations of societal issues, predominantly from within the boundaries that limit our investigation.

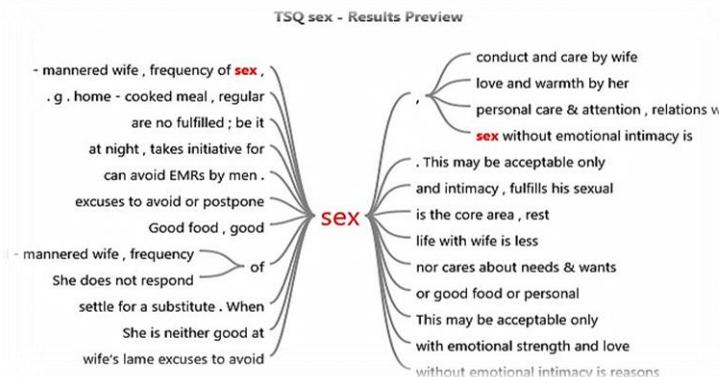
4. FINDINGS

Results, analyses and interpretation of the study are truly applicable to peculiar cultural and societal norm prevalent in Pakistan and may not be generalized for other cultures.

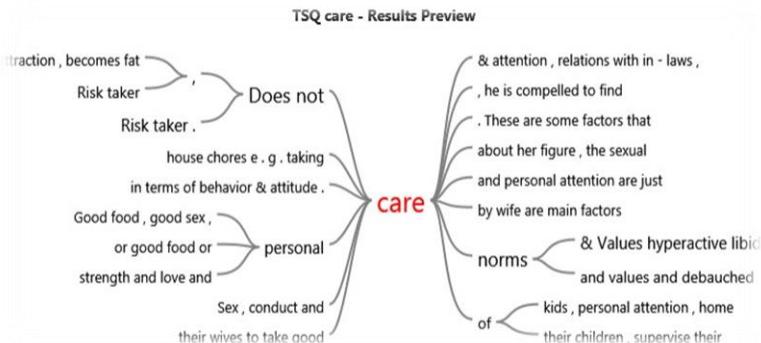
After the examination and classification of basic concepts, 80 fundamental nodes and 685 references were collected from the discussion. The categories were created based on the codes and repeated views. With repeated exercise and similarities of basic themes, primary themes were specified. These themes were classified as conceptual. These themes then identified as causes or factors that drive husbands involve in extramarital relations. These signified as:

- a) Interpersonal (domestic life and relationship between husband and wife)
- b) Intrapersonal (personality traits internal factors of husband)
- c) Contextual factors (external to individual)
- d) Social or Societal (external macro)

As the research method was of content analysis and there was no precedent of graphical model, following conceptual model was developed to depict the responsible reasons of EMR.



The content analysis using NVivo clearly depicts two of the most vocal factors that ignite EMR among men are “Sex” and “Care”. It may also be noted that personal care and attention both to husband and family at large are peculiar to society in Pakistani backdrop, shown as above. Men were of the strong opinion that these are probably two primary role and function bestowed upon a wife both by culture and Islamic codes.



Intrapersonal Factors

In this category, concepts from individual's characteristics from personality traits, genetics and his own beliefs, and attitude have been identified. These factors were further classified into 4 sub-categories:

Debauchery

Almost all participants vehemently dubbed the dogma that intense libido, frequent urge of sex and lasciviousness is in the nature of a man. This need may be fulfilled either by polygamy or EMR or deliberate suppression by most of the men having corresponding traits. In a typical Pakistani society, men usually confine to "one-woman-man status" due to immense influence by reference group

Risk Taker

Participants described persons as bold enough to take decisions both in personal and career life without much rational calculations; though might take time, fascinated by instant returns. They do not care much about societal norms, have their own values-set and like to do what they believe is good for them.

Pre-Marital Sex Experience

Persons who have pre-marital sex experience or strong love bonding(s) before marriage are more inclined towards EMR upon influencing factors. In case when a person is compelled for an arranged marriage due to family pressure or circumstances, would involve in EMR as he gets an opportunity to bridge the gap that had been created denying his own choice of relationship.

Cautious & Rationale

It is believed that Persons who are generally Coward, Cautious and Compromising have low tendency to establish EMR. They have a natural fear for social impact, especially family reaction; though have strong inner desire and belief.

Interpersonal Factors (Domestic Life)

Marital conflicts and state of domestic life refer to interactions and reaction between husband and wife. This comprises, emotional bonding, fulfillment of sexual needs, wife's behavior housekeeping and upbringing of children etc.

Sexual Relations (Frustration)

Husband does not find wife as a mode to sexual satisfaction anymore. Wife either does not fulfill frequency of sex demand, lacks initiative, hesitant to meet sexual fantasies, act as dormant partner during intercourse or gives cold response to husband's romantic moves. She makes obvious lame excuses to avoid frequent sex. The whole scenario lessens emotional bonding between the two and slowly husband withdraws himself from this pleasurable desire. This attitude further depletes husband's participation in other domestic matters and gap widens in a course of time. Some remarks are reproduced hereunder to gauge the delicacy of state-of-affairs

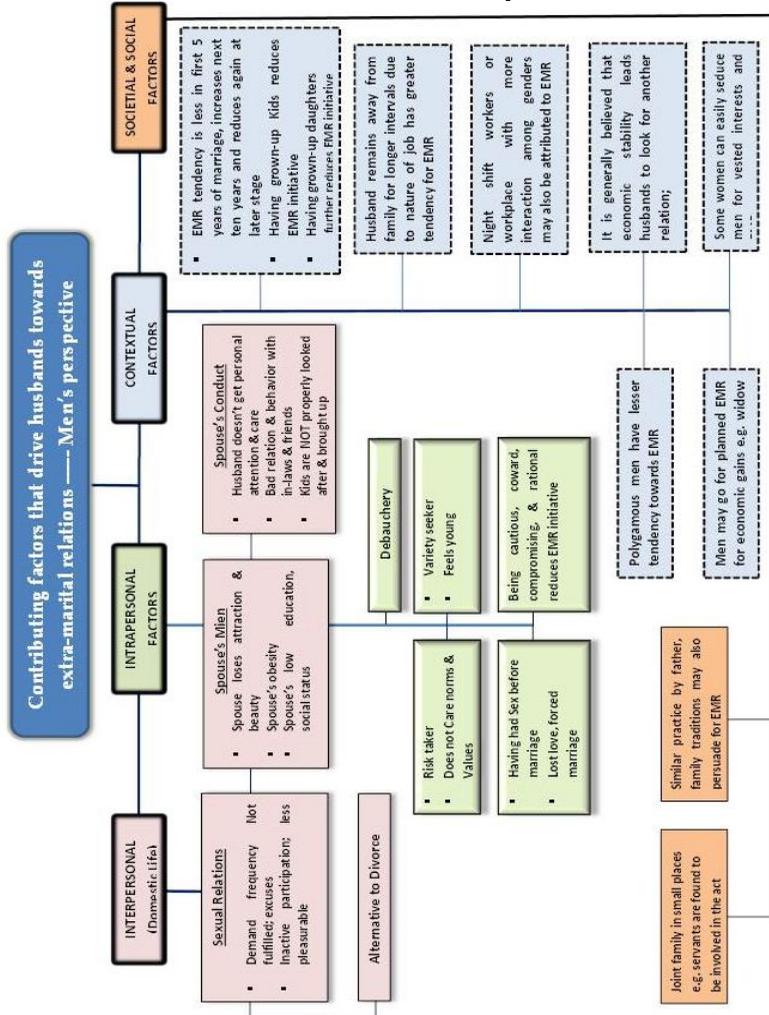
"Non-fulfillment of sexual need may entice husbands to start masturbation that further frustrate them"

"My wife often starts some religious rituals (pray, recitation, wazifa, fasting etc.) whenever she finds me in a mood"

"Wives believe that Sex is husband's headache not their; they do not take it a mutual act necessary for both,

Spouse's Mien

In a typical Pakistani society, women lose their physical attraction after marriage and especially after giving birth to children. Most of them have the obesity tendency, do not exercise and are not aware of right food intake. Men generally appreciate physical beauty, sense of dress up, right makeup, grooming etc. It is generally believed that women only have one objective in life; to get married, once achieved they are no more worried about their appearance. Men, on the other hand, get always attracted towards appearance and physical beauty. Lack or absence of physical appearance in spouses, tempt husbands to look around for a better alternative. Spouses who know how to maintain themselves are in a better state to restrain their men within home boundary.



Spouse's Conduct & Behavior

As narrated in the "Introduction" portion, "Home" has sanctity in its own meaning within Pakistani cultural norms. Woman, being the in-charge of this sacred institution, has a greater responsibility as well as respect. Her overall conduct towards husband, children and close members of in-laws determine her performance and rewarded accordingly. Men get put off when their home is not managed and taken care off as per societal norm, Islamic principles and personal desires. Men are ready to both forgive & forget their sexual performance for husbands, should they become ideal mother, excellent home maker, and acceptable daughter-in-law. Participants were quite vocal in framing charges against women; ignoring husbands' personal needs and care, prioritizing their likes & dislikes and ensuring due protocol at home. They believe this is their just demand as per Islamic codes of conduct. Interviewees also opined that first 5 years of marriage are like honeymoon as wives portrays best of behavior; consequently, EMR chances are low in this phase. Next ten years show the real face of wives; this makes the phase as most vulnerable for husbands. Beyond 15 years of marriage, status quo is maintained mainly when children are grown up, especially daughters.

"I am just an ATM for my wife & kids"

"I wish my wife could respect and obey me like my mother used to for my father"

"Modern wives hate to remain in kitchen...and I love home-cooked food"

"My best friend would have gone to EMR long time ago had his daughter not grown up"

Contextual Factors

Men's tendency and practice EMR largely depends on various circumstantial factors and opportunities that arise from time to time. It deems appropriate to mention that these factors do not ignite in isolation however, work as catalysts if other supporting factors are also favorable to EMR. Some of the factors that may create an opportunity for EMR and husbands would catch up fast if they are already on the lookout:

- a) When husbands are away from the family for a longer time period; either posted outstation or nature of job demands frequent touring. The physical distance prompt them to find appropriate substitution for physical relation, home-cooked food, care & comfort etc.
- b) Participants also shared that man who works in an environment where there is greater interaction between genders, night shift with more opportunity to share behavior & sympathies with female co-workers bring them closer for a potential EMR. Real life examples of hospitals, media houses, airlines, 24/7 customer service, law-enforcing agencies quoted to strengthen the belief
- c) Economic strength of men, more disposable income, surplus wealth/assets also induce and lure to have backup setup to fulfill personal needs and desires. This generally happens with the help of other supporting factors. Participants associated this with personality and family practices. Real life examples of landlords, industrialists, politicians, bureaucrats were mentioned to substantiate

- d) Some participants were also of the view that men may be absolved from EMR allegations as there are women who have the skills & charisma to seduce men to achieve their vested interests including; economic gains, comfort etc.
- e) Participants were quite vocal in advocating a general understanding that polygamy is a wonderful, legitimate and just solution to eradicate vice of EMR from our culture. If we follow Islamic principles, practice polygamy; all other factors that drive men for EMR become meaningless.

Societal /Social Factors

Our society and cultural subgroups play highly influential role in shaping up our behavior, attitude, personality and beliefs. Traditions in the family, practices and close reference group affect way we respond to social stimuli. As narrated above, some families and cultures do not discourage polygamy and/or ignore EMR by male members of society. This encourages husbands to have it if they can afford it. Men are also motivated if EMR trickles down in the family from grandfather.

EMR is visibly present in our rural setup, families living in small shelters e.g. servant quarters, lower strata of population where multiple families live together and mingle regularly. Frequent physical proximity of the opposite genders, mostly close relatives, generally leads to intimacy and relationship development. However, these relationships mostly inclined to sexual pleasure, without commitment and for shorter duration. As such we may call the involvement as extramarital sex (EMS) by definition and Not EMR, as defined earlier.

5. DISCUSSION

In order to save the diminishing prestige and honor of “Home”, the unit of society, we need to bring back its sanctity and role it played alongwith all expectations associated with it. If EMR is a menace to holy bonding of man-woman-children trio, we must diagnose its causes and find ways to close all possible loopholes. During the discussion, it was also shared that husbands who do not involve in EMR and bear the vibrations of highly dissatisfied domestic life ends up with extremely stressful personal life, acute depression and misery. To many participants, No EMR albeit contributing factors simply means either Divorce or more frequent fights or least harmful mode i.e. continued compromises however, that too, not without its emotional repercussions.

Husbands with EMR turn out to be more nice, caring and loving at home.

Women-at-home are found to be evolutionized and somewhat revolutionized in the past 25-50 years. Men find today’s woman as:

- a) More status and wealth conscious, over-ambitious
- b) More demanding for equal rights that are still undefined & unexplained
- c) Aggressive, rebellious, less obedient,
- d) Least interested in home making, cooking (man’s favorite route to his heart)
- e) Inclined to outdoor than indoor
- f) Less conscious & fearful of separation and divorce

In view of the above, writ of the husband in his own jurisdiction i.e. home has been challenged by none other than his own subordinate-in-the-past i.e. wife. Husband had

assumed this authority in wake of Islamic codes of conduct as endorsed by cultural values. The conflict damaged the basic structure of family with marital discord as a byproduct. Both, the debate & interpretation of “equal rights” seems an unfinished agenda of our social justice with the fear that it will only aggravate with the passage of time.

Limitation of the Study

The study faced several issues in conducting an unbiased, objective research with honest opinion on the subject:

- a) Cultural restrictions to speak on the subject; considered as taboo
- b) Inarticulate, somewhat unwilling participants
- c) Insufficient and inadequate research done in the past in typical Pakistan (eastern) backdrop

Future Direction

Sequel to this research might expose more pertinent factors and/or refine identified causes of EMR. Besides, our academicians, psychologists, social scientists, family counsellors and policy makers may also examine the findings objectively to suggest ways & means to improve the situation back home

- Contributing factors that drive husbands towards extramarital relations – Women’s perspective
- Suggestions, recommendations & remedial measures to minimize EMR trends – men’s /women’ point of view

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