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## Un Masking the Socio-Cultural Precursors of Miscarriages; Voicing the Unheard

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**Abstract:** Miscarriages are a trauma that devastates the social and family life of the sufferers. They create unexpected social and psychological problems concerning shakeup in endogamy, physical and mental torture, offensive diatribe from the family males and in-laws. Medical reasons like chromosomes abnormalities, uncontrolled growth of cells, and Rh factor, which are apparently evident in such serious conditions, are conveniently ignored and accepted as a natural process. Pakistan is a traditionalist society where miscarriages among women stem from malnourishment and a lack of basic body-enhancing ingredients. Added to this anomaly is the cruel system based on social discrimination, psychological pressures, political structure that does little for women rights, illiteracy, a cursed baradari system, and non-vibrant socio-economic system and an endless load of domestic labor, psychological and physical torture by the in-laws, deficient nutrition and indigenous healers who are more of quacks.

**Key Words:** Pregnancy, Un-Awareness, Reproductive Health, Uncertain Fears

### Introduction

This paper attempts to serve as an eye-opener to the policymakers who expend energies to investigate social and psychological causes of miscarriage. The technocrats in the government corridors design programs that are overbearing to take concrete stages to address the danger rising out of taking no

notice of conducting in-depth research into roots of social mishaps responsible for miscarriage and not allocating sufficient national budget for women's reproductive health.

Miscarrying means 'miss a carrying age' when a woman misses life in her pregnancy,

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usually the first trimester, which is termed as miscarriage. Miscarriage has fewer chances in the second trimester and still fewer to end in the last or third trimester. Losing a child due to a miscarriage to someone is a very painful and agonizing moment. It is known as an unplanned phenomenon. We should avoid hurling slurs at a woman who has lost a part of her own body. The vanished life of an innocent infant is an indictment that continues as an irremovable stain on her life. This should not be termed as cultural, or even semblance of a social phenomenon ‘miscarriage is generally common in pregnancies with single or more than one fetus. During pregnancies in which twins, triplets exist. One of the fetuses survives even though another dies. Removal of a lost embryo out from the mother's body puts her life in danger. (Davies, McKinnon, & Rains, 2001). But in some cases, the dead baby is removed from the mother’s womb before the birth of another baby; this is called the vanishing of one baby.

It is natural, after all, and humans are so helpless in front of Almighty. At the same end, it can be seen as a social experiment. Miscarriage is an episodic milieu that could destroy human life but, at the most conclusion, the end of new life. ‘Miscarriage is very common in early pregnancies. 8 to 20 percent of women are likely to know beforehand that their first pregnancy could end up in a miscarriage.’ Sometimes they lose their pregnancy before 20 weeks of having sustained it. 80 percent of those occur in the first 12 weeks. The actual miscarriage happens in married women. It starts up with abdominal pain and minute blood clotting, rarely with a rush of secretions in the form of bleeding from the vagina. Ultrasound and fetal heartbeat determine the visualization of pregnancy in

the uterus. After a miscarriage, patients are warned to keep away from sex. For the next pregnancy, traditionally, it is advisable to wait for three months by using shorter interval medicines or any type of birth control contraceptives to reduce the pain and bleeding; proper medication may be recommended by a gynaecologist. Another way for the women who have gone through this trauma is to avoid stress about the incident, and this may keep the patient safe from future complications.’ (Prager, Micks, & Dalton, 2018).

### Materials and Methods

A structured interviewing schedule was settled to gather evidence to unmask the socio-cultural cause of ‘miscarriages.’ In this respect, an all-encompassing questionnaire was planned and pre-tested dynamically. **Study design:** the paper dig out of the baseline exploratory study. **Setting:** Multan city and data collected only from married women.

### Review of Literature

‘The loss of pregnancy causes major suffering among couples and hampers their confidence to execute their future reproductive attempt. A single miscarriage may lose all future planning and amazing curiosity from the life of that couple. A recurrent miscarriage sometimes is an ongoing practice that is not in the control of the same woman. (Love, Bhattacharya, Smith, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Miscarriage has some internal and external reasons. ‘Numerous tests are useful for investigating the reason for recurrent miscarriages. It includes the lupus anticoagulant test, anti-cardiolipin antibodies test, transvaginal pelvic ultrasound scan, and thyroid function tests. (Strikwerda, Holleman, & Hoeken)

As parenthood is a beautiful phenomenon, ‘millions of women around the globe seek treatment for parental loss. This common tricky situation, a painful situation for the whole family, is a risk of life for the mother especially. It’s been testified as maximum women had successful pregnancies after miscarriages. Some just has been treated on medication by CAM. It largely consists of herbal medicine in Chinese culture. It has been like psychological interventions and nutritional supplements.’ (Lu, Li, Zhou, Ma, & Hu, 2021). The five heavy metals, chromium, mercury, arsenic, lead, and cadmium, are toxic in the placental barrier in the accumulation of fetal tissues. This is being not ignored by parents. It occurs mostly in unreported pregnancies’ (Amadi, Igweze, & Orisakwe, 2017).

‘Miscarriage is a traumatic and shocking event not only for women but also for their families. Miscarriage usually peruses a deep period of sensitive distress. Their remaining psychological concerns continue to live with them for several months till the next conception. But fluctuation in mood stays till the time fear of loss is attached to the delivery. Late pregnancies may multiply the worries of women, but their future benefit is in the happiness and management of depression and anxiety (Nynas, Narang, Kolikonda, & Lippmann, 2015). ‘Miscarriages have dual effects, physical and psychological. In physical effect, symptoms include infections, warm secretions from the body, bleeding vagina, abdominal and back pain, to name a few. Psychological concerns consist of the risks of hopelessness, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, fear of next loss, fear about no conception and impending suicide’ (Quenby et al., 2021).

‘The situation of miscarriage normally changes worldwide. Both unintended pregnancy and abortion have a deep emotional and psychological impact on couples. The people need small size family and have to control over the timing of their births as part of leading independent life’ (Singh, Remez, Sedgh, Kwok, & Onda, 2018). ‘Immunotherapy allows women to tolerate parental antigen and recurs dysfunctional immune modulation. This psychological mechanism is a powerful tool that helps in saving the desirous couple from miscarriage. Another defensive and beneficial mechanism are based on Micronutrients Vitamins that are essential to fulfil mother’s nutrition. The majority of the mothers have multiple tasks at home, and until nutritious food is not taken, her health will be compromised. (Coomarasamy et al., 2021).

## Results and Discussion

Women are normally abused socially by the family and partners. People violate the women and taunt them for not being able to conceive. They blame her family by different names to degrade their wife economically by undermining her personality and bringing limited dowry. Sometimes when a woman was out of their “*baradari*” when the woman was involved in exogamy, they created the concept of “*apney tey ghair*.” They abuse the woman on the pretext of a single error, how much little it maybe she is labeled as being from “*ganda khandan*.” Those types of curt comments from the family were heartbreaking and very difficult to bear. The bride is very sensitive about her family as being a woman usually is a very touchy matter. The in-law family members think that the woman could create wedges in their whole family. The in-laws were always judging her by negative sides.

Mostly the mother-in-law keeps keen eyes over her *bahu*.

‘Conception and pregnancy loss are bookends of the development of human life. The discussion that revolves around a successful pregnancy is mostly centred on hope, pleasure, joy, and amusement to overcome any type of grief and multiple cultural emotions. Couples with early pregnancy loss have different experiences, mostly bitter and questionable experiences. It also varies with medical history.’ ([Gladding & Crockett, 2019](#)). At times the mate is involved with other women and produce a vacuum between both of them.

### Depression

A couple with a nuclear family had to miscarry thrice due to the family and mental sickness. As a result, her husband left to have no child. She is insecure, considering cultural shame and being punished for being a stigma in the groom’s house. She had a love marriage, and that was socially unacceptable by her in-laws.

Women feel deeply distressed, sad, and dejected over the loss of their child, and grief, fear, and guilt encompass miscarriage. Women had vanished first pregnancy due to social, cultural and psychological reasons at a young age of fewer than 25 years of age. Many women suffer due to more embryos. ‘Advanced age, obesity, depression, and uterus damage cause multiple miscarriages. As a result, couple with sorrows and without children is at a big disadvantage’ ([van Dijk et al., 2020](#)).

Women become disheartened, miserable, and hopeless, sometimes in trauma after a miscarriage when they have no love and care from their husbands. Allegations and accusations from the family members are a

serious insult to motherhood. Sometimes the situation arises when they had to leave their home due to being disrespectful in daily routines. Sometimes they are ruined as they could not bear a child time and again. In such serious situations, the women need solace and words of sympathy from friends, family, and mostly from her life partner. Since it is a painful and tragic phenomenon, the mother-in-law finds it convenient to blame her for all the ills.

The research deeply observed the impact of miscarriage among working women and concluded that the unfriendly surroundings, depression, aggression and the low economic status of partners were observed as the major causes of frustration. At other times some domestic problems and tension also became the cause of miscarriages. ([Collins, Riggs, & Due, 2014](#)). Women practised bad emotions, which set up that recurring failures presented major life crunch. It is causing numerous psychosomatic complications and melancholy surroundings. Though miscarriage just after marriage is professed as an unpleasant event, consequent ones attract ridicule from the family and outsiders

### Socio-Psychological Stigma on Miscarriage

A childless woman felt a victim of stigma even if she voluntarily remained childless for some specific purpose. In a rage of anger, the father-in-law is ready to expel his daughter-in-law from home. Her home mates did not cooperate with her, due to which she felt insecure, lonely, and considered herself unlucky and infertile. ‘Many times one in four pregnancies terminate in miscarriage, yet this topic is still considered a taboo rather than a trauma. Pregnancy terminates due to several problems like clots disappear due to weakness; fetus left

the womb, or sometimes unexplained anxiety, high temperature, high blood pressure, and diabetes' (McKeating et al., 2015).

Women with miscarriage history are not only stigmatized by society, but the family also labelled them as women with bad character. She is ignored by the family and maltreated. During the next pregnancy, she does not get preferential treatment, nor any care that is so essential during the prenatal. Her delivery is taken as a normal delivery. Due to operating, the risks are lower to save a child and the mother. For the reason that both mother and child are so weak. One of them on ultimate risk if doctors did not tried their best.

### **Desire for a New Baby**

Some families desire new baby just after the loss of first pregnancy. Though in case next pregnancy appear in previous. As uterus ultimately was not clear from first germs and attached with next one. This condition leads to second miscarriage of defects in fetus. This is observed in afresh couples. Because they think that the new arrival would make socio-psychological space for her mother in the society. It's natural shock that engulfs her when she is embracing motherhood. In some cases, it causes more than one miscarriage. 'Miscarriage is silent death of the fetus, and emotions of would-be mother. It is only painful for the persons who experience it once or more. So it is much more a psychological phenomenon than a physical one. The sudden relief after this shock leads to the desire for the next baby.' (Miller, 2015). The women took stress being alone about that loss and failure case when a couple is living in a nuclear family.

### **Patriarchal Nature of Society**

In patriarchal culture, females are oppressed in all cases. Like male dominancy in descision

making, economic balance. Women are measured as the bottom case (*NeechZaat*) and assumed as a male's personal property. The society is a severe test for the women. Male babies demanded from the same women who have no respect in same house. At the earliest time, nobody has any advanced technology about the check of the fetus. It is technically proved that the practice of sexual category rest on the male inheritable factor. So it is not the choice of women to interfere in matters related entirely to God. The males show criminal negligence when they refuse to take their pregnant women to the doctor, assuming they did not need medicines and the women could survive themselves.

In a patriarchal society, the male is all-powerful and the spouse is deprived of all benefits. Males have an inherent habit of taunting women after and before miscarriage about their supposed rights, degrade their personality, and abused like the women had no firm relations with their partners. 'Thyroid autoimmunity with no scanning, depression, abdominal pain, deterrence to blood flash in the vagina does not improve subsequent pregnancies. The outcomes are related to abortion, miscarriage, and vanishes' ([Dong, Stephenson, & Stagnaro-Green, 2020](#)).

### **Physical Violence**

Pregnant women at workplaces are acceptable as they are open to physical violence and harassment. Unfortunately, some women do heavy work, which is against their health. Bodily exploitation regularly becomes worse in pregnancy and cause injuries. 'Reproduction and mental health are deeply associated. No childbirth is medically related with an augmented threat of psychiatric disorders in the mother. Induced abortion is

comparatively more dangerous for childbirths that has been linked with mental health and social problems. Women in the first trimester need care, happiness, and a balanced diet: happiness and good relation with spouse matters for healthy mother' (Group et al., 2017). Physical torture of women takes them towards miscarriages. It also occurs due to physical torture from her partner and in-laws.

### Superstitions Indigenous Healer

Some misconceptions and unawareness continue to raise their heads during the check-up at the medical centre. At the rural level, patients prefer to visit the Hakeem, *daii*, health worker and other uncertified institutions that are run by vested interests with little experience in complicated reproductive matters. Blind trust in these quacks, in most cases, leads to difficult situations and ultimately to miscarriages.

The other reasons for miscarriages are that people in rural areas believe in amulets. Those include *taveez* and *jadootona* (magic). So they get the services of a native healer. Women during pregnancy try to take medical prescription to care for reproductive fitness. The inexperienced health care providers ruin the health of a pregnant mother, and inept handling in most cases results in serious consequences. Due to that indigenous health care activities, practice becomes a major cause of miscarriage in women.

A pregnant woman in rural areas takes medicine from the indigenous healer who misguides her about the gender of the child in the womb. For example, in many cases, the fake healer incorrectly informs the mother about the gender of the child. If it's a girl, the family members do not take it to light and get annoyed. In such cultural background, all the

family members, including the husband, treat the woman harshly and subject her to psychological and physical tortured. The final result is that the victim's health suffers and has a miscarriage.

Many cases of miscarriages were observed during the data collection, and these are increasing gradually, especially the research on self-miscarriage, which is a pertinent issue of this age. In some cultures of our society, there is a dearth of awareness due to a lack of education. As per old customs, people treat pregnant women as normal physical beings and force them to do heavy work in fields and do not care about their health, treatment on illness. They only use their traditional way of treatment from Hakeem for herbal medicine by observing the facial expression and previous visits the Hakeem makes a judgment on the gender of the child in the womb. If it's a girl, the relatives ask Hakeem to give medicines that kill the fetus to get rid of the evil. The Hakeem does as instructed. She is stigmatized by her family and termed as a wicked woman in the social circles as well as among the relatives, and these accusations leave an effect on her health.

### Family Shocks and Depression

"A woman miscarried when she heard the news of her father's paralytic attack, and she went into depression. She lost her baby during delivery, as she was traumatized and overcome by grief on hearing the news about her father. She was shocked, just like a suddenly being in a rocking boat. "Another woman miscarried when she heard about the past affair of his husband. She realized that the affair had not ended after marriage with him. She was not ready to accept any other woman in life, and this distressing news broke her health, and she

fell from the stairs unconscious. “Any unexpected fact about the spouse and children becomes unbearable, and it can lead to serious consequences for a pregnant woman like mental disorder, and she can lose the fetus.

Lack of awareness, large distance to the care centres results in miscarriages, and these issues are increasing day by day among women. ‘Due to the awareness programs for pregnant women, the percentage of miscarriages is 15 to 20%. Clinically and genetically, miscarriage is a major cause of concern for couples and families experience social and psychological trauma. A social and cultural dilemma to ask again and again about pregnancy increased after the years of marriage. This sense also imbalance the couples. Other problematic conditions are hormonal problems in couple, immunological factors, genetic factors also promotes miscarriages’ ([Mahadi et al., 2016](#)). Since there are sustainable awareness and counselling programs to communicate to the women at the community level in rural and urban areas, some institutions conduct some compact programs in the urban centers, but due to lack of interest, such programs do not last long in their true entirety. Counselling is a great mind leveller among the women facing anguishing conditions. Refusals are done with a big heart; nevertheless, women do not demonstrate interest and or getting any proper training, leading women towards a loss of a fetus before birth.

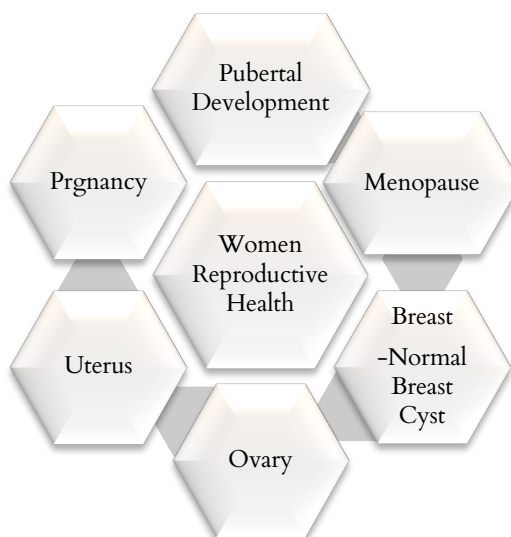
### **Expectations of Society**

A patient had a miscarriage twice. She wants to be prenatal soon due to social and family

pressures. Superstitions, emptiness in life, and before people begin calling her infertile (*bhanji*). Some would go even to the extent of saying that literacy prevented her from being pregnant and have children. Medicine nursing and midwifery professionals may be less miscarriage familiar with psychosomatic, ‘Wedded women with recurrent miscarriages and no child are depressed as they had to follow by societal prospects of reproduction nut constant tirade from the relatives causes serious psychological, mental depression. Many married women want to please their in-laws and husband. Around the globe, women are subject to a serious grievous situation over the loss of a pregnancy or in case of no pregnancy’ (Ncube & Ticharwa, 2017). It is a global culture that women need babies, and the latest medical research proves medically it is proved that women’s bodily need to live a healthy environment. But in some cultures, babies are the essence of life, and family remains incomplete without a child.

### **Age Factor and Women Reproductive Health Cycle**

During another travel around, the argument in the research found which is oldness aspect in females is causing defects in hormones. The age issue is majorly found in educated girls. Who did not marry due to studies and became status conscious? It is the behavior of society; the educated girl is self-sufficient. Another factor is the larger property of father, which inherently goes to *beti* (girl), so they have no marry their girl to avoid the fear of property and girl grow old.



**Figure 1**

### **Underage Marriages**

The research focused on an unmask issue that is also a major cause of miscarrying—early age marriages. The girl under puberty is not able to handle pregnancy. The girls may not have matured in their early years and may not conceive a child. She doesn't even know about her reproductive health. So the chromosomal and other internal enzymes may not have developed inside her body which can have a serious effect on her baby, which then turns into caused miscarriage.

### **Manual Labour Work**

The facts which research explored out is the societal, psychological and social reasons for miscarriage. The crucial and sensitive three trimesters of pregnancy create multiple fears in her mind. Its fir three and last three months are mostly in discomfort, but it varies in all women during every pregnancy. She is then progressively moving to a more life-threatening and complex situation. At this stage, there is hardly space for a minor mistake because she needs nutritious food and health

care. Any sign of weakness can become an alarming situation and pose a danger for her and their baby. Most of the women are not aware of these precautions and become victims of miscarriage.

A pregnant woman faces a critical situation when she reaches the end of 6-7 months of pregnancy. She cannot work nor do home chores or lift heavy objects. But the situation is not very bright. She is forced to work and carry out almost all domestic errands. She has no helper to assist or facilitate her; many times, she faces miscarriage.

### **Fear**

Another cause of miscarriage is that when once a woman passes through the ordeal of miscarriage, she cultivates a fear inside her when she is pregnant due to the external factors of society and family. She did not forget their behavior when she was pregnant for the first time. She feels stressed and mentally fatigues to face a similar situation



A pregnant woman faces a critical situation when she is pregnant for 6-7 months. She is not able to work hard or lift heavy objects, yet the family members do not spare her, and she has to work forcibly without any facilitator by her in-laws, and on most occasions, she is a victim of miscarriage. In the present study, episodes of physical torture of respondents were included, and it was confirmed that one of the reasons for miscarriage was violence and physical torture by the husband and parents-in-law. Evidence suggests that social, cultural and environmental aspects have importance to enlighten the stress of the women after miscarriage.

The instruction of females is an important yardstick to measure the awareness of pregnant women. It was found that the mothers to be had no information on the care to be taken during the pregnancy or knowledge in understanding about reproductive health issues. They cannot use medicine on their self-predictions all through the prenatal period, which becomes the reason for miscarriage. The research also tried to investigate the best age factor suitable for becoming pregnant. To unmask the women's maternity issues like miscarriages that happen due to accidental situations.

Another point which found was the reasons of miscarriage when expected women had spent 5-6 months, and they move to more critical and sensitive period with little or no chance of any little bit of mistake. The woman in this critical phase requires proper food and health care about health. Without nutritious food, she will tend to grow weak, and so will her child in her womb. The constant work will give her constant fear of leading a life without good intake. Miscarriage would continue to

knock her closely to take precautions for the maintenance of good health.

The Psychological cause of miscarriage, when once a lady has lost her first fetus. Primarily, she reserves a distress confidential her during second pregnancy. Secondly, family and people create harm, as she lost earlier. She cannot forget the adverse behavior of the antagonists also during her first pregnancy, and she feels mentally and psychologically stressed. Pregnant women are in a critical situation when they reach the 6th or 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy. She finds it difficult to work or do heavy activities but is forced by her family and in-laws not to sit idle. This is not a good omen for giving birth to a healthy child.

The misconstructions prevail roughly for the treatment centre at the proper stage. Publics in the rural areas prefer consulting *Dai* and uncertified clandestine institutions. Those small scale and hidden treatment centres are not aware of and misread the actual situation. Due to poverty and the absence of a husband, the pregnant women have no choice but to consult these *Hakeem's*, but it's a known fact that they spoil the case. *Tabeeb* are no experts, nor do they have any formal training in their field; they practice the same old traditional methods, and most women have suffered from a miscarriage.

Another cause of miscarriage in married women is the hearing of sudden, shocking news. A traditional mishap that the in-law's family practices during the pregnancy of their women are treating her badly and not caring for her husband. This attitude causes stress that affect badly the health of the mother, and she miscarried. The worst thing is that after this miscarriage, they again start treating her badly in some cultures and blame her for losing or killing the new life.

C section is the only chance to save a child and mother. In a number of cases, the weak and unlucky families lost their child dies inside the mother's womb. So she loses the fight against nature, but the attitude of near ones leaves an indelible mark on the mother's mind. Throughout this period, she is surrounded by complex mental situations and weighs her character against her adversaries. Her mental and physical health is compromised, and she is deprived of her partner's cooperation, and this stressful situation causes miscarriage.

Socially people can't accept these negative activities of people, and their thoughts become unacceptable; they stigmatize the weakness of women. The woman needs to rejuvenate her energies for the second pregnancy.

The researcher's in-depth study provides ample information on self-miscarriage related to abortion, the latter being important issues in today's medicine. There is a lack of education and awareness in our society, especially for women. The physical condition of the patient carried little value as she cannot make out the difference between work before and after pregnancy.

Another discussion that causes miscarriage is the suffering due to economic issues that do not provide enough to run a home suitably. The economic problem is a big issue among rural families whose purchasing power is low. Pakistan is a victim of an economic downturn due to the non-availability of jobs and limited income proposed the community to face poverty. Families continue to face economic

problems, especially how to feed a large family. Miscarriage is such a situation that is common; families have no money to spend on their loved ones neither resources to treat the patients for any serious ailment.

### Conclusion

Pakistan is not as educated and technologically advanced state as those in its neighbourhood. It is a transparent policy deficient state. At the national level, the passed bills for the rights of women are not clearly modified. Especially in the case of married ones associated with reproductive health, women exist as the planet's most powerful species. She doesn't need care, medication an extra diet. A comprehensive code for women maternity care is required to make nationhood strong. Ultimate policies and laws must be made to encourage women to respect in the rural and urban complexes. This will help basically make the nation strong and healthy. A healthy mother has a healthy child, and a healthy baby must have a healthy mind. This may lower the ratio of miscarriage. It strengthens women and lowering the physical and mental violence on females. Women must give property rights according to Islamic principles. Because in some communities finds out the result of that other main intention for miscarriage is that people have not cured a pregnant woman as they should be. The caretakers didn't know that how sensitive an issue it is. Due to the limitation, most womankind sufferers of miscarriages by cultural means.

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