

Sibling Estrangement among Unmarried Working Sisters after their Brothers' Marriage: A Qualitative Study

Abstract

Sibling estrangement is a vital issue in families of collectivist cultures after marriages of siblings, as a new matrimonial relationship emerges it sometimes intensifies existing inequalities and emotional distance. The current study investigates the single sister's estrangement towards brothers' marriage, their familial, gender based, psychological and emotional struggles as well as coping strategies. A qualitative research design was implemented by using semi-structured interviews for data collection and reflexive thematic analysis. A sample of six females aged between 30-40 years were recruited through purposive and snow ball sampling technique from different cities of Pakistan. The sample size was considered appropriate as thematic analysis focuses more on the conceptual depth of data and thematic saturation was also achieved within the data set. The participants were expected to have at least one married brother having two years of estrangement. The major themes emerged including *impact of marriage as a turning point in sibling closeness, sibling conflict and comparison, disagreement over personal and financial matters, psychological aspects, emotional unrest and emotional distancing as coping*. The findings indicated that brothers' marriages function as vital restructuring events that exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and reshape sibling hierarchies. Therefore, awareness session, counselling and developing culturally sensitive family interventions would be imperative in improving the family ties among family members in collectivist cultures.

Keyword: siblings estrangement, family dynamics, marriage transition, gender roles, thematic analysis