

Theme: Marriage

Source A: 21st Century Non Fiction

3,000 women a year forced into marriage in UK, study finds

Jo Revill and Anushka Asthana, The Guardian, Saturday 8th March, 2008.

At least 3,000 young women in Britain are the victims of forced marriages each year, with the scale of the problem far bigger than originally thought, according to a ground-breaking report out this week.

The first study ever conducted in the UK into the prevalence of the custom shows that there are far more victims, spread across different ethnic minority communities, than official figures suggest. 5

Teachers should be given a key role in talking confidentially to young girls whom they believe may be at risk of being coerced into marriages, particularly if there is suspicion that an older sister has been married off against her will, the report recommends. But there also needs to be more determined effort within communities to end the practice, so that forced marriages become a matter of shame and humiliation for parents, instead of being a matter of pride. 10

The Home Office-funded study calls on authorities to take the institution more seriously, so that it is treated as an issue of illegality, domestic violence and bullying. The study, which looked at cases in Luton, a town with a large south Asian community, found at least 300 cases where victims had contacted community organisations. Yet the government's forced marriage unit, set up to tackle the problem three years ago, handles only 300 cases a year nationwide. 15

The report concludes that at least 10 times that number, and possibly far more that, are taking place, without any agencies ever finding out, although forced marriages are illegal under British law. 20

The government has ordered a national count of missing schoolgirls amid fears that hundreds have been forced into marriage, or are living in fear of so-called "honour" violence. Researcher Nazia Khanum, who carried out the study, said: "There is this wall of silence around forced marriages. Of course, there are thousands of arranged marriages happening in Britain each year but that is very different, as both partners in these are willing participants. We are talking about girls being very much coerced into those marriages, often not knowing beforehand who their husbands will be, and then having little 25

or no rights once they are married. Most of them feel there is simply no one they can turn to.'

Labour MP Margaret Moran, who helped set up the study in her constituency of Luton South, said she was shocked by the scale of abuse which they had uncovered. "It's uncomfortable for people to think about, but it can't remain this hidden any longer. "It's not simply about Muslim families; we also found that it happens among Chinese and African communities too, such as the Somali families. Nor is it something that comes across with new immigrants. 30 35

"Many of these women were third-generation British and it is just a custom that is being handed down between the ages. It is something that causes enormous grief and now has to be seen for what it is: a form of bullying, often resulting in violence and great damage."

The report has discovered that sometimes brides are being forced into marriages with men who are severely disabled, and whom they have never met before. There are particular concerns about the women who are brought up outside the UK, are married overseas and then brought into the country as brides. 40

Many women then find themselves "subjugated into the in-laws' family culture" which can be a traumatic experience.

Some girls are married off when they are just 16, and even if they want to go into higher education, it almost certainly means the end of their schooling. 45

Shaminder Ubhi, the director of the Ashiana Project, which provides refuge to south Asian, Turkish and Iranian women, said in response to the report: "Certainly we agree that forced marriage, at a basic level, is an abuse of human rights. It can affect girls as young as 14, 15 and 16 years old and can involve emotional coercion, forced imprisonment, violence and in the extreme, murder. 50

"It is an abuse of women."

Source B: 19th Century Non Fiction

In Victorian times, divorce was an option only open to wealthy married men, with married women treated as second class citizens. The following newspaper article from The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, published on 29th July 1879, reports on a man who decided to sell his wife instead.

Article from *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* newspaper, 1879

Selling a Wife by Auction

It is only a few months since that a paragraph went the round of the papers relating how a certain stonemason at Rawtenstall, in Rossendale, sold his wife to another man for the sum of £10; but it would seem from certain proceedings which took place last week at Stacksteads, a Rossendale village, that the money value of wives has sadly declined since that event.

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A navvy, living at Tunstead Mill, Stacksteads, determined to get rid of the 'partner of his joys and sorrows' by offering her for sale by auction, the highest bidder as usual to 'take the lot.'

On Tuesday last the sale took place at the husband's house, but despite Solomon's testimony as to a woman being more precious than rubies, and notwithstanding that the spectators were numerous, the highest offer was only 4d, at which low figure the wife was eventually 'knocked down' to another navvy, who, by-the-by, lived next door.

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The seller wanted to 'throw in' three children, but the buyer objected, and the bairns were left on hand. The wife, however, went joyfully to the home of her new owner, and seemed to be quite as glad to get away from her late liege lord as he was to part with her.

The occurrence has caused quite a stir in the locality, and has been commented upon by the local press.

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Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section. You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Q1) Read again the first section of Source A, lines 1-20. Choose 4 statements which are TRUE. (4 marks)

- A. At least 3,000 young women in England are forced into marriage every year.
- B. Studies showed that findings were spread across different ethnic minority communities.
- C. The study found 200 cases where victims had contacted community organisations.
- D. Forced marriages need to be seen as a source of shame, not pride.
- E. The forced marriage unit was set up 4 years ago to tackle the problem.
- F. Teachers should be given a key role in talking to girls they think are at risk.
- G. The government forced marriage unit deals with 400 cases a year nationwide.

Q2) You need to refer to **Source A and Source B** for this question. Write a summary of the differences in views towards marriage in both sources.

(8 marks)

Q3) You now need to refer **only to Source B**, the article regarding a husband selling his wife. How does the writer use language to add humour to the article?

(12 marks)

Q4) For this question, you need to refer to the whole of Source A together with Source B.

Compare how the two writers convey their different attitudes to marriage.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different attitudes

- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- support your ideas with references to both texts.

(16 marks)

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section. Write in full sentences. You are reminded of the need to plan your answer. You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Q5)

'There is no longer a place for marriage in the modern world. A woman is not a man's possession, to be given away at an altar, and nearly half of today's marriages now end in divorce anyway.'

Write a blog piece in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation 16 marks for technical accuracy)

(40 marks)