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# **Study of Family Life Education in Pakistan: A Substantial Endorsement in Islamic Way**

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## **Abstract:**

Family life education(FLE) program in developed countries is carried out by educational and psychological experts since 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now, these countries are conducting several FLE courses besides, making resource materials available in their educational institutions on different levels. The key objectives of their FLE program are to strengthen and sustain family as a social institution. To achieve this objective teen agers are provided with guidance in their educational institutions about overcoming their future family disputes, methods of nurturing children and assuming a responsible role as a family member. The developed countries have designed and developed guidelines, courses and resource materials suitable for their social set up. While in Pakistan, these are not apposite as there is a major cultural difference in the concept of family of these societies. Moreover, solving family life complications in Pakistan, by way of local concepts of family life and its objectives is still not taken seriously by the experts. Currently Pakistan is a rapidly developing country in the fields of education, business and technology. The pace of development warrants from every citizen of Pakistan to groom himself as an educated and successful entrepreneur. Research shows that the deteriorating family system is one of the biggest impediments in this context. Being an Islamic country we need to seek guidance from Islam which provides the most balanced/uniform family concept. This paper establishes that an Islamic family life education program is the essentially needed of Pakistan in view of its cultural environment. This is a theoretical research consisting of a small comparison of modern and Islamic concept of family. This is a brief study encompassing in depth FLE usefulness for Pakistan.

**Key Words:** *Family, Education, Family Life, Objective, Pakistan, Islamic Way*

**1. Introduction:** The study about family life education in the educational institutions is a continuous process across the globe since decades/ages. The philosophical meaning of family and its concept of living as a group of family members, is described by the social and anthropological scientists in detail. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the study

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about the types of ‘family’ in different societies was published and a new struggle was started to introduce a common definition of ‘family’ acceptable amongst all type of societies<sup>1</sup>.

**Family:** Word ‘family’ is originated from Latin word *familia* means household.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental type of a human family is commonly based on blood relation. Concept of this type traveled evolutionarily with the guidelines of religions, races and clans. Members in this family type are father, mother and children. This is called a basic or nucleus family<sup>3</sup>. Family is a relationship of some people tied by two ways, by law and by blood. By this understanding blood relatives of mother and father are also bound as a family.<sup>4</sup> In an environment of a house to be maintained to up bring children, the servants may also be included in this group.<sup>5</sup> Religious definition of family is based on marriage.<sup>6</sup> The objectives of this type are reproduction of humankind, development of healthy human beings and training of children to live and lead ethics of human life. So, the concept of family exists as a social institution universally.<sup>7</sup> The religious concept of family is as old as the existence of human beings on earth. The holy *Qurān* mentions the beginning of human beings on earth as a family consisting of a man and a women as a couple.<sup>8</sup> In the revelations of Bible the sacred relationship of a man and woman by marrying each other in the name of *Allāh* can be witnessed.<sup>9</sup> Marriage is a strong relationship which provides performing most essential duty of producing new human life and further develop the human society. Thus, a complete system of making a family and building a healthy society in a family environment is provided by *Qurān* and *Sīrāh*.<sup>10</sup> The last Prophet of *Allāh* Muhammad (SAW) has provided a paradigm of the rights and responsibilities of each family member as *Sīrāh*. Furthermore, the Islamic concept of family includes husband, wife, their children, their parents, their parents’ siblings in a group of family in the chapter of social connections (*pardāh*) and property rights (*mirāth*).<sup>11</sup> Islam pays attention to the rights of the members of a broken family as well.<sup>12</sup> This is why, Islam directs parents and society to take best measures to educate children.<sup>13</sup>

**Family Life:** Family life is a performance while being a family member by fulfilling the objectives of a family. The nuclear family generally is based on mother, father and children, possesses basic objectives of upbringing and training of children in a peaceful environment and take care of parents.<sup>14</sup> This objective is met successfully with the active involvement of man as father and woman as mother. These two members of a family should be physically healthy and mentally mature. They should be financially independent. They should be trained and educated about how to perform their roles as responsible family members.

**Family Life Education:** Family life education is a term used to cope with the changing complexities in family trends. When contemporary cultural trends influenced the religious norms and customs in societies, it was required to educate people about family responsibilities to up-bring children in a suitable environment for their normal physical and mental development. Industrial and secular revolutions created complicated advancements to disturb already existing family set ups. Resultantly, family disputes, rates of divorces and the ratio of broken families increased. Therefore, the study of family life education in social studies was focused by the experts to save and sustain families and their objectives. This study is aimed to educate a person regarding basic skills of happy and healthy living; to teach him how to live with another person as a family; to guide him how to raise a child; to train him how to cope up with family problems; to groom him as a responsible family member.<sup>15</sup> To meet these objectives, various FLE courses have been designed in different countries for different stages of development of their youth. Key objective of all these courses is to sustain human family as an essential part of society.<sup>16</sup>

**2. Literature Review:** The western societies initiated research on the family system depending upon the philosophical approaches of their social scientists and educational and psychological experts. By this academic effort they came to the conclusion to launch family life education programs on their government level for their next generations. One of these studies is a compilation of the depictions of educational and psychological experts “Family Influences on childhood behavior and development Evidence Based Prevention and Treatment Approaches” compiled by Thomas P. Gullotta and Garry M. Blau.<sup>17</sup> In this book thirteen writings of famous researchers are compiled. The main thesis of this book is child development by family. Garry M Blau has suggested that the community should take the responsibility to help a child during his development stages especially when he lacks family members to take his responsibly. He says that the number of unmarried parents is increasing day by day and when a family breaks the grandparents look after their grandchildren. Most of the times family does not present to look after the children that is why community should come forward and play a positive role to foster a child.<sup>18</sup>

Another book on family life education is “Family Life Education Principles and Practices for Effective Outreach” by Stephen F Duncan and H Wallace Godard. This book highlights the efforts of all those American experts who worked to launch FLE in America.<sup>19</sup> The book presents FLE need for a person by explaining those short comings and deficiencies, prevailing in the society, and how to overcome these through this program. By this way the book explains the objectives of FLE which are

to help parents to grow their child as a confident and well behaved person in his future life and to help a person to become a successful and responsible family member.<sup>20</sup>

FLE as the future need of Pakistan in Islamic way is the main aim of this study. To assess the current situation of Pakistani family system, number of news reports are available. Among which, one is the report of Ijāz Ahmad "Rising Divorce Rate A Tragedy" published in Daily Pakistan on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019. He reports that almost 255000 women get divorced in Pakistan in a year. According to this report two reasons of this soaring figure are low education and lack of religious knowledge about family system.<sup>21</sup>

Zunairā Rashid in her article "Why the Increase in Divorce Rate?" published in Daily *Nawā e Waqt* dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019 writes that the reasons of this alarming situation of family life of Pakistan are ironically portrayal of misguided family values by the social and electronic media in shows and dramas. Domestic violence and intolerance are the other reasons due to which the rate of failure of marriages has increased to 60% during past few years.<sup>22</sup>

It can be construed well after having gone through above publications, that the religious guidance provided by educational and psychological experts may be compiled and designed as courses and resource materials for educating the youth of Pakistan to sustain Muslim family system.

3. **Family Type in Pakistan:** Generally there exists two family types in Pakistan, joint family and nuclear family. The ratio of nuclear family is gaining acceptance with the passage of time. Researchers of social sciences have concluded that due to the impact of contemporary trends, the tendency of adopting of nuclear family system, is also rising in Pakistan.
4. **FLE and Pakistan:** In Pakistan currently no local FLE program is initiated in educational institutions. The western FLE programs are imported by few educational institutions which have been failed to achieve the objectives of FLE programs positively. That is why, parents and the students are not satisfied by these initiatives. It is because these initiatives are not taken by the owners of institutions seriously. They have just initiated these programs to satisfy a small number of people having modern western thought to attract them to opt their institutions for admissions for education of their children. In fact, the already available modern western FLE programs are not suitable for Pakistani people especially keeping religious and cultural values of our society in view. That is why, a customized suitable FLE program should be developed by the local experts catering for local needs. Following questions are required to be answered:

1. Is FLE needed in Pakistan and why?
2. What may be the objectives of FLE program of Pakistan?

This paper will endeavor to respond above queries with references.

3. **Need and Importance of FLE for Pakistan:** Only one concept of family exists in Pakistani society, whether these are Muslims or non-Muslims. People of Pakistan are 96.28% Muslims, 1.59% Christians and 1.60 % Hindus.<sup>23</sup> All accept opposite sex marriage based family system. They up bring their children and fulfill the rights of each other. Culturally they all do not accept pre marriage and without marriage sex relationship. That is why, there is a huge difference in adopting the definition of the term '*family*' prevailing in modern secular countries. The modern concept of family is different from the fundamental religious concept. Modern definition describes family as a pair of married or unmarried individuals living together and their socially recognized children (biological or adopted).<sup>24</sup> Gay partners can also make family and to help them the western system has legalized gay marriage.<sup>25</sup> While in Pakistan almost 96.28% population is Muslim and they adopt Islamic definition of family. In Islam, family is a group of individuals living together on the basis of *nikāh* and the key objective of *nikāh* is to produce children that is why the couple would necessarily involve a man and a woman. Islam is a complete code of conduct describing rights and responsibilities of family members to be abided by all. Minorities in Pakistan follow their religious code. They all have their own marriage system which disapproves of free sex and gay marriages. Despite having few similarities in various religious family systems of Pakistani society, failure rate of marriage is still rising with time. Experts conclude that the cause of this development is lack of education and knowledge about family system objectives, absence of training and preparation to play a positive role as a family member besides, non acquisition of religious guidance.

## **6. Constitution of Pakistan and Need/importance of FLE:**

1. In the *article 31* of the constitution of Pakistan it is necessary for the state to provide conducive environment for the people of Pakistan to lead their lives in Islamic way.<sup>26</sup> Its constitutional responsibility of the government of Pakistan to help its citizens in strengthening their Islamic way of life. The social, political and economic life of the Muslims of Pakistan draw guidance from *shariyah* teachings. The government of Pakistan has taken few steps in order to discharge its responsibility in this regard. Amongst the steps taken are passing of legal amendments and implementing compulsory syllabus pertaining to the Islamic teachings at all levels of education systems. The process of this compliance is still incomplete.<sup>27</sup> As there is no source of provision of education about Islamic family education to the individuals during their schooling.

2. In the constitution the provision of education, grooming of quality of life and strengthening of environment of family by helping the father for protecting mother and child is the responsibility of state. Moreover, provision of basic necessities of life to the citizens is also the duty of the state. Thus, state is bound to help the patriarch in providing subsistence (*nafqah*) to his family. By reading article 25A, 31, 34, 35, 37 and 38 it is concluded logically that the Government of Pakistan is to take all necessary measures to educate its Muslim citizens regarding true sense of Islam<sup>28</sup>.  
foregoing in view FLE should be initiated by the state.
7. **Family Problems in Pakistan and FLE:** There are very complex social problems in Pakistan giving rise to family disputes. Dr Syeda S'ādia in her PhD research explored that Pakistani society is full of social problems specifically the family related problems. She discovered that the cases related to family disputes are increasing rapidly. Among which the number of family cases registered only in Lahore in 2014 were 12913. In mega city like Karāchī 50% increase in these cases was reported by the concerned departments.<sup>29</sup> Same position is observed in rest of the country during last five years. Another group of researchers of Pakistan Shāzia Ramzān, Sairā Akhtar, Shabbīr Ahmad, Muhammad Umar Zafar and Hāroon Yousaf have conducted their research on exploring the reasons for the increased rate of divorces in Pakistan. During their data collection they have indicated 25 reasons for divorce in broken families. These 25 reasons are the critical social problems of Pakistani society due to which the marriages fail. Among these are illiteracy, lack of understanding, ignorance of family rights and duties and little knowledge of Islamic sense of family and marriage. Due to these deficiencies, lack of tolerance and trust deficit builds amongst family members matter finally ends up in courts for final verdict from court.<sup>30</sup> The researchers have suggested to introduce courses in the educational institutions for teaching the youngsters about family, roles of family members and conflict resolution.<sup>31</sup>
8. **Endorsement of FLE in Islamic Way:** Family and its fundamental concept provides a common definition of this term which is; a group of persons consisting of father, mother and their children living together in a home to live in human way as per their social environment demands to live. In Pakistan this social demand is Islamic, so, to help strengthen the family here, an Islamic family education program needs to be introduced in the educational institutions. Dr. Hāfiẓ Masud Qāsim and Dr. Muhammad Tāhir Ziā have emphasized on educating the youth in their educational institutions to prepare them to handle their family conflicts and hardships successfully.<sup>32</sup> They have explored Pakistani society as

socially ethnic consisting of several casts, creeds, tribes and families practicing their own traditions. This ethnicity demands a uniform Islamic guideline to reduce complications in the home environment.<sup>33</sup>

**9. Objectives of FLE Program of Pakistan:** The above analysis lead us in a direction to commence work on a uniform Islamic FLE program for Pakistani educational institutions by education and psychological experts. Here few key objectives of this program are presented. On junior level should be:

1. To educate children in interpersonal skills like speaking softly, responding positively, expressing politely in Islamic Way
2. To teach children basic hygiene by teaching them the method of doing wudu and ghusl
3. To teach children basic emotions and etiquettes of love, hate, sharing, thanking and tolerance by forgiving and respect

**On Senior Level:**

1. Educating family system of Islam by *Qurān* and *Sīrāh*
2. Teaching Muslim Family Law of Pakistan
3. Providing awareness about the rights and responsibilities of family members
4. Educating the best practices for success of a family
5. Highlighting the outcomes and setbacks of a broken family
6. Clarifying the duties of father and mother of a child after divorce
7. Guiding about the existing consultation forums in case of facing any problem

**10. Conclusion:** Pakistan is a country based on Islamic ideology. Currently it is progressing and growing rapidly in the fields of education, business and technology. This positive development demands every citizen of Pakistan to prepare himself for improving his social, economic and psychological conditions in consonance with teachings of family law in Islam. This research finds that deteriorating family system is one of the serious impediments in its way and that is due to the lack of Islamic education regarding family. So, serious attention is required on this matter through involvement of educational, religious and psychological experts, who should customize the courses of FLE making it commensurate with Islamic teachings suitable for Pakistan.

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