



Marriages in Afghanistan

FC Processing

1st January, 2017



Overview

- ~ 90% of marriages in Afghanistan are arranged
- <5% are proxy marriages
- ~60% are Pashtun and 40% 'other'
- Translation is important:
 - Religion = 'Islam'
 - Faith = Sunni/Shia
- Traditional for the bride's family to refuse the first (or second) proposal

**Pages 63 to / à 64
are withheld pursuant to section
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16(2)

**of the Access to Information Act
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Sheerni Khuri (small)

- Ceremonial engagement/acceptance of the proposal
- Bouquet of sweets (bride's to groom's family); \$ from groom's to bride's family
- Only close relatives invited to bride's house; bride's father then officially announces acceptance of proposal
- Groom gives bride a ring

Sheerni Khuri (small)

- Possible that bride and groom can meet each other prior to Sheerni Khuri for bride's approval; they would be accompanied by the bride's mother or sister (depends on the family)

Sheerni Khuri (big)

- Usually held at a hall sometime after the SK (small); official celebration
- ~300-400 people
- Gifts exchanged between families
- Nikkah performed ~5-10% of the time (allows bride and groom to spend unaccompanied time in public)
- If Nikkah is performed, this is the date of marriage (BUT they are NOT married in the eyes of the family, important for bf)

Before the Nikkah

- Two nights before Nikkah, 'Shab Kheena' (Afghan term for Mehndi); purely symbolic, henna is not placed directly on the bride's hand
- The night before the Nikkah/Arosi, bride's family puts henna on her feet

Nikkah

- This is the wedding ceremony - happens after the SK (in ~90% of cases)
- Can be as many as 2000-3000 guests
- Generally the same day as the 'Arosi' (marriage celebration)



Nikkah

- Bride is kept in separate room and appoints an attorney (with a witness); witness then returns to ceremony to confirm that the attorney is the same person chosen by the bride. The Mullah (Imam) is also present, as is the groom's witness. They all complete the marriage template (which we do NOT accept as the MC)

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Nikkah

- Marriage Booklet (issued by Supreme Court) is the only acceptable MC
 - For marriages outside Afghanistan, MC issued by Afghan Embassy
- Bride wears dress to Nikkah and groom usually wears something after Nikkah bride changes into white dress

Nikkah

- Two promises made by groom's family:
 - **Muhajel** – groom immediately pays money to bride (can be \$200k) bride almost always ignores this promise
 - **Majel** – groom's family will pay a set amount to bride upon separation/divorce; essentially binds the couple because amount is unreasonably high
- During Arosi: cut cake, celebratory drinks, henna for bride and groom

After the Arosi

- After the Arosi
 - couple is considered married – **relationship should be questioned if no Arosi**
 - Close family sleeps at groom's house; bride puts her hands over sweet table and promises to obey husband and follow rules of husband's family
 - Couple permitted to share bedroom
 - Bride's family brings breakfast

Takhtjami (Valima)

- ~ 2 days after the Arosi, big family feast and first time bride symbolically prepares and serves food to her husband



Honeymoon

- Not a requirement – some people honeymoon and some don't (not necessarily a red flag)
- Common destinations: India, Dubai, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan (especially if they have family)

Factors for Consideration

- Second marriage for a woman - examine reasons for end of first marriage closely
 - If divorce – causes gossip and problems for groom's family
 - Divorce Certificates must be issued by Satara Mahakama (Supreme Court)
 - If death – she needs consent of her in-laws, which they would not normally give because she is expected to marry husband's brother



Factors for Consideration

- If the woman already has children
- Proxy marriages
- First cousins can marry but not uncles/nieces
- Marriages between Sunni & Shia
- Dari speaker marrying an Urdu speaker without further explanation of communication



Factors for Consideration

- Pakistan Pashtun and Afghans are considered compatible
- Dari and Pashtun are considered compatible (Dari is language only; Pashtun is language and ethnicity)
- Hazara (Persian speaking ethnic group) generally marry within their own community
- Majority of interviews are in Dari

Factors for Consideration

- Age difference up to 15 years is common (as long as groom is older)
- As with all FC1's, each application is assessed based on overall evidence; every couple may not have undergone each ritual.....

FC4 Dependents

- List of the private universities
 - <http://www.mohe.gov.af/?lang=en&p=private>
- List of the Government Universities
 - <http://www.mohe.gov.af/?lang=en&p=gov>
- Website address for some Universities
 - <http://www.mohe.gov.af/?lang=en&p=mpsites>

FC4 Dependents

- Adoptions do not exist in Afghanistan (and is enforced more strictly than in Pakistan)
- The only possibility for non-biological children is *de facto* dependents

File Flow for Afghan files

- ~500 electronic files and ~90 paper files (to start)
- ~40 have been CA reviewed in ISBAD
- Distribution of files to begin shortly
- CPC not checking 'counterfoil required', please double-check!
- Interview/DNA procedures....stay tuned!