# Remedial Measures of Negative Effects of Digital Technology on Conjugal Relationship in Islamic Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

We have entered an era of enhanced digital connectivity where people are connected through social media and latest technology. The increase in the use and the accessibility allows humans to engage and disconnect easily. This technology is not only used in workspaces but also being used in everyday social relationships. The impact of technology use on conjugal relationships are also being affected. Its impact is yet to be explored in Pakistan as the use is increased in metropolitan areas. This study investigates the use of mobiles, television, laptops, and social media platforms as how this negatively impacts on an individual's sense of security, control as well as attachment. It explores the extent to which couples are addicted to social media and the latest technology in order to interact with each other and the society instead of face to face communication. The study is qualitative in nature to have in-depth examination of the potential negative impacts of technology on intimate couple relationships. And also finds remedial measures, suggested by Islam, in order to reduce the negative impact and save conjugal relationships.
**Keywords:** Conjugal Relationships, Digital Technology, Islamic Perspective, Remedy, Metropolitan

## 1. Introduction:

The internet, mobiles, and the social media have become an integral part of the lives of Pakistani married couples. Couples are now using technology in both small and large occasions. They discuss when to use it and when to stop it. Part of them are controversial in its use and have harmful experiences. At the same time, some couples find that digital tools make

communication and support easier. Social networking sites are most visited sites on internet. They are used as a medium for online communication in order to connect with friends and to make new friends. Facebook and Twitter, most popular sites, have over 100 million users, each.[1]

**1.1 Current Scenario:**

In present existence, using digital technologies is very comprehensive and are extensively used by everyone, everywhere. Digital technologies are creating an impact on what, where, why, and how individuals learn and from where they learn. This extensive use is in the form of mobiles, laptops, computers, tablets, smartphones etc. The main drive is to form a better connection between rapidly, effortlessly as well as cost-effectively. People get connected using a range of digital services and the resources. There are numerous benefits of learning but they are also accompanied by challenges for people who are in marital relationship. These challenges are real and are proving to be weaknesses.[2]

**1.2 Problem Statement:**

Keeping in view the current scenario, it is important to view the status of Pakistan and the use of technology among married couples. The increase in the use and the easy access allows couples to engage and to disconnect easily. The impact of technology use on conjugal relationships is being affected as Pakistan is also one of the countries with high rate of mobile and social media users. Its impact is yet to be explored in Pakistan as the use is increased in metropolitan areas, particularly. The use of mobiles, television, laptops, and social media platforms as how this negatively impacts on an individual's sense of security, control as well as attachment is important to be explored. The main focus is to explore the extent to which couples are addicted to social media and the latest technology to interact with each other instead of face to face communication. After finding the extent, it is also important to provide remedial measures in the light of Islam.

**1.3 Research Question:**

The research questions are as follows:

1. How the use of mobiles, television, laptops, and social media platforms negatively impacts a married individual's sense of security, control as well as attachment with the partner?
2. What are the remedial measures, suggested by Islam, in order to reduce the negative impact and save conjugal relationships?

**1.4 Objectives:**

The objectives are as follows:

1. To explore the use of latest technology by Pakistani married couples to find its negative impact in their relationship.

2. It explore the addiction of couples to social media and the use of latest technology in order to interact with each other instead of face to face communication.

3. To explore what Islam says about saving the conjugal relationships from the adverse effects of latest technology.

**1.5 Methodology:**

This research is qualitative in nature. It is conducted to understand how a married individual subjectively perceives the use of technology for communication in order to make his/her relationship work. The study has in-depth examination of the potential negative impacts of technology on intimate couple relationships. The data is taken from:

1. Written records
2. Cases studied in different areas
3. Observation
4. Reviewing Literature
5. Reviewing Qur'anic Verses
6. Hadith

**2. Use of Technology and Marriage**

Since ages, individuals have developed different ways of expressing feelings and views using verbal or nonverbal signs. Thanks to the digital technology which is used today, individuals do not require to meet in person for communication.[3] People are interested to get married by way of the blessings a wedding entails including protection, companionship, love, and emotional support. However, outdoor those high quality outlooks on marriage, marital life also accommodates with numerous conjugal pressures, tensions, arguments and disagreements. A rising quantity of studies has inspected and studied the feasible effect of the usage of social media on marital relationships and conjugal lives.

**3. Negative Effects of Digital Technology on Conjugal Relationship**

This section answers the question-1 of the study stated as:

> *How the use of mobiles, television, laptops, and social media platforms negatively impacts a married individual's sense of security, control as well as attachment with the partner?*

Various studies find that the current social media and technology usage is not helping decrease conflicts of marriages but in fact they are magnifying the issues in marriages. Additionally, the networking sites are associated with negativity among married couples making them experience low quality of their relationship or a pending divorce. This does not mean

that the social media is the major cause for problematic relationships but it can be viewed as a symptom of a bigger problem.

**3.1 Overuse & Isolation:**

One of the most noteworthy hazards of technology is its capacity to make people feel isolated. It might be thought that "It sounds like a paradox! We use technology to connect to all sorts of people". This thought is true because technology is a great way to connect and to communicate with people of the world. It is a tool for learning new things, making business or keeping in touch with others. But use of technology can also be problematic when people begin spending a lot of time online, wasting multiple hours on the social media and begin relieving interactions with the use of technology for the real-life interactions.[4]

**3.2 Use of Technology by Couples:**

Couples in a long-term relationship view and use technology differently compared with those who have been together for a shorter period of time

Couples who have been together for ten years display unique way of technology utilization inside the context of their relationship in comparison with the ones who've been together for a longer time frame. Couples who have been together for a decade or much less—additionally typically more youthful than the ones who've been together for longer— use technology, internet and social media to satisfy their associate, to help with the logistics and verbal exchange of their relationship. Adults who're lengthy-partnered use era in their dating, but are much more likely to use a number of it together—with the aid of sharing email addresses and social media profiles as a pair.[5]

**3.3 Harmful Outcomes (Breakup and Divorce)**

The usage of Facebook predicted damaging relationship outcomes like breakups, divorces, and cheating. The outcomes are expected only when there is a clash on the use of Facebook and among those who have been the part of love relationship for three years or less.[6]

**3.4 Social Media Usage:**

Social media has changed the way sexual relationships are formed and maintained. Offline Public Display of Affection (PDA) is holding hands and hugging. Otherwise, the affection displayed online, called public display of commitment, is now shown by sharing pictures, liking pictures, posts and other content. Liking the material is a real sign of acceptance. It is important to change marital status online in order to indicate that the relationship is official. It is also seen as a way to prevent people from flirting with partners.[7] The romantic relationships are getting disrupted from heavy use of the social media. The social media makes

surveillance of the partner much easier. Online monitoring of partner's behavior is leading towards jealousy, anxiety as well as mistrust. Individuals having low self-esteem find their partner's actions on the social media platforms as faults in the long run decreasing levels of satisfaction in their relationship.[8]

High usage of Twitter is linked to the negative outcomes in marital relationships. In a study, the length of a relationship does not relate and impact the amount of time spent on social media and their conjugal lives. Irrespective of the length, those using Twitter are likely to have conflicts anticipating negative outcomes. It is also found that Facebook anticipates higher rates of divorce in 43 states. Moreover, use of social media forecasts disappointment, troubles as well as lower quality in marital life.[9]
One of the participants in the study conducted in Brigham Young University, responded:

> *"I notice a difference in me and my partner's behavior when we are on social media for long periods of time during any given day. We are less patient and a lot more anxious or on edge. We are more likely to misunderstand each other or start an argument. We tend to be a lot lazier"* [10]

### 3.5 Distraction and Less Attention:

A study finds that some of the partners have felt that their spouse are distracted by their cell phones when they are together. They also get upset by the ample amount of time their spouses are spending online or by what they do online. Surveillance and jealous are most influential reasons of negative impact on married lives. In married relationships, excessive use of the social media is causing parties to be distracted and give less attention to their partners while being together. This can therefore lower quality of time they spend together, affecting and damaging intimacy in their relationships.[11]

### 3.6 Major Negative Factors:

Number of negative factors emerges through social media between couples are surveillance (keeping an eye on other's activities), depression, jealousy, mistrust, ignorance, improper interaction etc.[12]

### 3.7 Loneliness:

The partner who is passionate about use of the social media can make his/her partner feel lonely or ignored, while they are physically together. Moreover, seeing one's partner using social media in excess to socialize can cause suspicion and jealousy.[13] Later this can lead an individual to monitor or spy on his/her partner and to get involved in harmful behavior.

**3.8 Surveillance:**

Surveillance is very common in short or new relationships to find information on their partner in order to know them better. This gives an impression of a positive influence initiating jealousy.

**3.9 Jealousy:**

The increased use of Facebook induces jealousy in a married relationship when indistinct information is discovered. And subsequently, this may cause excessive use of Facebook in order to minimize ambiguity that was disclosed. This leads to an infinite loop. The partners who spend more time on Facebook are more likely to experience jealousy in a relationship. Unsuitable online activities by a partner may cause the other partner, due to jealousy, to regularly check up on other partner's activities. A jealous partner express his/her feelings online, possibly causing an argument between them. [14]

**3.10 Snubbing:**

Some research are suggesting that social media is changing the way that we interact with each other offline as well. A term is coined known as "phubbing" which means "the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by concentrating on one's phone instead of talking to the person directly".[15]

**4. Remedial Measures, Suggested by Islam:**

This section deals with question-2 stated as:

> *What are the remedial measures, suggested by Islam, in order to reduce the negative impact and save conjugal relationships?*

According to Islam, marriage is a more than having someone to call husband or wife. Marital relationship is an incredible blessing. ALLAH says in the Qur'an:

> *"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought?"[16]*

**4.1 Source of Interaction:**

Social media is affecting the way couples communicate as virtual interactions are worsening the relationship. In this regard, ALLAH says in Quran:

> *"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones"[17]*

**4.2 Socialization:**

This is the era of technology. The world has now become a global village. Social media is used for posting and sharing videos/photos,

communicate, see profiles, celebrate festivals, chatting and sending messages.

ALLAH says:

> *"The believers are but brothers, so make reconciliation between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy".*[18]
> *"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong".*[19]

## 4.3 Keeping Good Relationship:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) guided Ummah to keep a good relationship as the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a best example in this regard. He (PBUH) ordered us to overlook mistakes and live a better life.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he may be pleased with another".*[20]

## 4.4 They Love Each Other for ALLAH's Sake:

This means that the partners make love and obedience of ALLAH (SWT) the basis and focus of their relationship. It means one love someone so much that he/she wants the partner to last beyond this lifetime and into Hereafter. It means one love someone too purely because of how much they remind of ALLAH and help to get closer to Him. Our limitations of spirituality to acts of physical and external worship blind us from viewing how much our partners contribute to refining our character.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Nothing is placed on the Scale that is heavier than good character. Indeed the person with good character will have attained the rank of the person of fasting and prayer."*[21]

## 4.5 They Communicate Like Friends:

Happy Muslim married couples talk like friends, in both good and bad times. In good times, the couple waits to tell each other about their whole day, they laugh and share ideas, complement each other, respect opinions and learn from variant points of view. In fact, the happy Muslim married couples communicate like the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and His wives did.

Aisha raḍyAllāhu 'anha (may Allāh be pleased with her) narrated that:

> *Allah's Messenger ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said to her: "I know when you are pleased with me or angry*

*with me." I said, "Whence do you know that?" He said, "When you are pleased with me, you say, 'No, by the Lord of Muhammad,' but when you are angry with me, then you say, 'No, by the Lord of Abraham.' " Thereupon I said, "Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Allah's Messenger, I leave nothing but your name."* [22]

### 4.6 They Never Lose Attention from Each Other's Needs:

The main reason for marital stress and conflict is always due to the neglect of a partners's essential needs. The following points figure out fulfilling spouse's primary needs:

1. Ask your spouse: "What is the one thing you cannot do without in this marriage?" Give choices to think about respect, love, emotional satisfaction, physical satisfaction, financial safety and peaceful Islamic environment at home, etc.
2. Ask them how they want these mentioned needs fulfilled. Give examples to help figure out preferences: ask if they want you to get surprise gifts, orally compliment more, take initiatives to pray, read and reflect on Qur'an together, plan nights, consult before making a decision, dress up and prepare surprise meals etc.
3. Write down needs as well as preferences.
4. Make dua and genuine efforts in order to fulfill spouse's primary needs.

### 4.7 They are Comfort of Each Other's Eyes:

Happy Muslim married couples struggle to become comfort of each other's eyes. They seek to be answer to Dua that ALLAH has taught us to make:

*"And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous."* [23]

### 4.8 They Make Each Other Bloom:

Marriage makes people partners, not parts of each other that are controlled and commanded over. ALLAH has created us to contribute in different ways has blessed with the potential to be what He wants us to be. Be that person who inspires, boosts and helps your partner discover and use their GOD gifted traits in order to bloom and be a cause of joy.

### 4.9 They Make Time for Each Other:

Every relationship requires exclusive attention every day. Just like one is saving every day to build comfortable house for future. We cannot imagine ourselves to be alone in the house that we have built. Now is it too

hard to give half an hour of your daily time to the person who needs it the most?

**4.10 They Fight Enemies: Ego, Evil Eye and Shaytan:**

Here is what the growth curve of any Muslim couple that is learnt to manage their marital conflicts looks like:

1.  1ˢᵗ year of marriage: blame all the conflicts on their spouse
2.  2ⁿᵈ year of marriage: blame all the conflicts on their spouse, evil eye, shaytan and magic
3.  3ʳᵈ year of marriage: blame their spouse for causing all conflicts and themselves take minor blame for reacting ridiculously
4.  4ᵗʰ year of marriage: make sure that their spouse takes half of the blame for their conflicts
5.  5ᵗʰ year of marriage: Feels the need to change oneself

Lower self is an enemy within every one of us. ALLAH records Yusuf's 'alayhi'l-salām (PBUH) observation of lower human self in the Qur'an:

> *"… Verily, the (human) self is inclined to evil, except when my Lord bestows His Mercy (upon whom He wills). Verily, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* [24]

Allowing lower self to succeed in marriage instead of viewing marriage as a way to purify oneself is one's own choice. ALLAH says in Surat Ash-Shams:

> *"And [by] the soul (self) and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]."* [25]

**4.11 They Sense Each Other's Stress:**

There are times when a spouse is not being normal or he/she gets ticked off by little things and they do not notice special things their partners are doing for them. If we look into the deeper sight, we will find something that is bothering them, instead of their partners. No matter how frustratingly they might be behaving, try to find what is wrong and sense their stress.

**4.12 They are Conscious of ALLAH (SWT):**

The most powerful way to combat conflict is to remember that ALLAH is watching us, our every move, expressions as well as hearing every single word.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"I guarantee a house in Jannah for one who gives up arguing, even if he is in the right"* [26]

If one disagrees with spouse or gets hurt by any action, bring ALLAH's presence to the mind first as to lower the anger and after that approach the issue peacefully. Put concerns across as mildly as possible because this gentleness is far more likely to allow the spouse to see your point than lashing out. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said to Aisha raḍyAllāhu 'anha (May Allāh be pleased with her):

> *"Aisha! Show gentleness, for if gentleness is found in anything, it beautifies it and when it is taken out from anything it damages it."* [27]

## 5. Conclusion:

The study concludes that avoiding the use of social media is not possible in this era. People are addicted to this medium. Islam allows us to be with the world in advancement but it is important to look into the teachings of Islam as to avoid conflicts and adverse effects of using technology. Marriage is a blessing. Islam says to be humble with each other, avoid conflicts, give each other time and understand the difference of personalities.

ALLAH says in the Qur'an:

> *"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought?"* [28]

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