Challanges Faced by Newly Reverted Muslim Women in Seeking Marriage

by
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Challanges Faced by Newly Reverted Muslim Women in Seeking Marriage supervised by

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Approval Page

Approval of the Thesis

This thesis titled **"Challenges Faced by Newly Muslim Female Reverts When Seeking Marriage and Suggested Solutions"** was submitted by **Sahar Qureshi** to the **Department of Islamic Studies, International Open University**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts in Islamic Studies**.

The work presented in this thesis has been reviewed and approved by the undersigned:

APPROVAL PAGE

I – the undersigned – certify that this thesis was carried out by **Sahar Qureshi** with Matriculation Number **ST10147601** in the Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, International Open University, The Gambia, under my supervision.

SUPERVISOR **Date:**10/10/2026

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Date:

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

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Declaration

I, **Sahar Qureshi**, hereby declare that this thesis titled **"Challenges Faced by Newly Muslim Female Reverts When Seeking Marriage and Suggested Solutions"** is my own original work and has not been submitted previously for the award of any degree or diploma at any university or institution. All sources of information used in this thesis, whether published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged, and references have been cited in accordance with appropriate academic guidelines.

I further declare that this thesis is based on my independent research and analysis, conducted under the supervision of **Professor Raufu Oyedapo**, Department of Islamic Studies, International Open University. I acknowledge the valuable guidance and support provided by my supervisor, colleagues, and members of the examination committee throughout the course of this research.

I also declare that the data collected and presented in this thesis are accurate to the best of my knowledge and have been handled in accordance with ethical research standards, as required by the university's research ethics policy.

Signature of the Author:
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Acknowledgements

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allāh جل جلاله, Lord of the worlds. I begin by thanking Allāh for granting me the strength, clarity, and perseverance to complete this dissertation titled **"Challenges Faced by Newly Muslim Female Reverts When Seeking Marriage and Suggested Solutions."** This research was inspired not only by academic inquiry, but by years of direct engagement with reverted Muslim women through the community groups and platforms that I manage. Without the guidance and mercy of Allāh, this work would not have been possible.

This dissertation represents both a scholarly effort and a personal responsibility. Through my ongoing interaction with reverted sisters, I have witnessed their struggles, concerns, and unanswered questions regarding marriage, belonging, and community support. This research was undertaken with the intention of giving voice to these experiences, increasing understanding, and contributing toward practical, faith-based solutions that may benefit individuals, communities, and institutions in the future.

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“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love, but Allāh guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are guided.” (International Ṣ. , 1997)



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Abstract

This study focuses on the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage within Muslim communities. Islam encourages marriage as a means of protection, companionship, and stability, yet many reverted women struggle to access this institution due to the absence of Muslim family support, limited community connections, and lack of guidance. Unlike women born into Muslim families, reverted women often do not have elders, relatives, or trusted intermediaries to assist with spouse selection, verification, and compatibility assessment. This research uses survey responses from reverted Muslim women and members of the Muslim community to understand these experiences in depth. The findings highlight issues such as social isolation, vulnerability to unsuitable proposals, emotional stress, and the limited role of mosques in providing structured marriage-related support. By examining these challenges through Islamic teachings on marriage, guardianship, and community responsibility, the study identifies a gap between Islamic principles and current community practices. The research proposes practical and faith-based solutions, including stronger mosque involvement, premarital counselling, and community-based support systems, to create a safer, more supportive marriage process for reverted Muslim women.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Allāh speaks about the blessings of marriage, describing it as one of God's signs. It highlights that spouses are created to provide comfort and peace to one another. God has placed love and mercy between them to strengthen their bond. The verse also suggests that these aspects

of marriage are signs for those who reflect on God's wisdom and guidance. Essentially, it emphasizes the tranquillity, affection, and mercy that marriage brings, all of which are part of God's plan. Marriage is an important aspect for Muslims, as it helps maintain faith, stability, and fulfillment, but for newly reverted Muslim women, the journey to finding a supportive and compatible spouse can be challenging due to social isolation, cultural differences, and a lack of community resources. (Ruhaylee, 2012, p. 37) The journey of newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage is often fraught with unique challenges that are not typically encountered by those born into the faith. These women must navigate a complex intersection of cultural, social, and religious dynamics while adhering to the principles of Islam. (El-Kassem, 2011, p. 192) The process of finding a suitable marriage partner becomes even more daunting when considering factors such as social isolation, lack of community support, and the prevalence of Islamophobia. This research aims to delve into these challenges, providing a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles faced by newly reverted Muslim women and proposing actionable solutions to create supportive environments that align with Islamic teachings. By addressing these issues, the study hopes to contribute to the well-being and faith of these women, ensuring they find compatible partners while maintaining their religious integrity.

1.1 Background and Significance of the Study

The increasing number of individuals reverting to Islam, especially women, has created a need for studies to address the unique challenges they face in their social and personal lives. One significant area of concern for newly reverted Muslim women is navigating the complex process of finding a marriage partner. These women often face numerous obstacles, including social isolation, lack of support systems, exposure to non-Islamic dating practices, and challenges related to Islamophobia. (Raja, 2014, pp. 3-4) As they seek to adhere to Islamic principles while finding a suitable spouse, the process becomes laden with difficulties. This study aims to identify the specific hurdles these women encounter and provide solutions to mitigate these challenges by fostering supportive environments aligned with Islamic teachings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Newly reverted Muslim women face considerable difficulties in finding a spouse who is compatible with their faith. (Ahmad, 2014, pp. 71-84) These challenges include navigating cultural differences, overcoming social isolation they might experience within Muslim communities, and dealing with the impact of Islamophobia. These women often struggle to find marriage partners who are committed to adhering to Islamic principles, and existing marriage platforms may not always align with Sharia-compliant values. Without proper guidance and community support, many of these women find themselves exposed to non-Islamic practices like dating, which further complicates their journey to finding a suitable spouse. These challenges are influenced by a range of socioeconomic characteristics in Islamic communities, including:

1.2.1 Family and Community Structure

Extended family plays a significant role in facilitating marriages in many Muslim communities. In traditional Muslim societies, extended families, including parents, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives, often participate actively in the marriage process. They help identify potential spouses, discuss important matters related to compatibility, cultural values, and Islamic understanding, and assist in negotiation and supervision of the process. This support network can make finding a spouse easier because families share knowledge, social connections, and advice that help protect the rights and interests of both parties.

When a person belongs to a strong Muslim family network, elders often discuss future roles, expectations, family responsibilities, and religious understanding with the prospective partners and their families, allowing these important matters to be understood clearly before marriage. This extended support creates a sense of belonging and trust that is often missing for reverted women who lack such immediate family networks. Without this support, reverted women may be vulnerable to misinformation, exploitation, and emotional pressure due to limited access to trusted family guidance and community links.

Scholars and researchers note that extended family systems in Muslim societies are designed to build social cohesion and to provide emotional, cultural, and logistical support during major life transitions such as marriage. These systems not only preserve

cultural values but also help maintain familial ties and provide stability in matchmaking and marital decision-making. (Muhamad Rafiqi Hehsan, 2024)

Islamic teachings further emphasize maintaining kinship ties and supporting family members in important matters, such as marriage, thereby strengthening the broader community and reducing social isolation for individuals. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him said, “and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should unite the bond of kinship (i.e. keep good relations with his kith and kin).” (Al-Bukhārī, 2026) [Hadith: Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī; Book: Good Manners and Form (Al ʾĀdāb); Chapter: To honour guest and to serve him; Hadith no. 6138]

1.2.1.1. Role of Extended Family

Finding a spouse is easier when one belongs to a Muslim family. It is important to note that having a Muslim family and extended family plays a key role in arranging a marriage. Not only do the elders in the extended family discuss the future roles of the couple, but many important points are also discussed and understood. Specifically, as they both understand Islam and their families' cultural background, they can sort matters out and make things easier by discussing them before the couple gets married. Here, having an extended family is the biggest support, which reverted women lack. Not only do they not have this support as they are new to Islam, but many people also exploit, misuse, and misguide reverts, taking advantage of them as they lack knowledge. Finding a spouse is easier when one belongs to a Muslim family. (Sangeeta Dhami, 2000).

1.2.1.2. Influence of Community Norms

Sometimes even the wider community is involved, like North African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities; they don’t marry outside; if they do, they are cut off from the community.

1.2.1.3. Marriage as a Collective Decision

When talking about marriage for one person in Islam, it is not just a personal decision; it is a collective decision. Marriage is not done by only two people; instead, it affects the family, relatives, and becomes a responsibility for the family to be part of the decision. The family decides a person's marriage because it affects their family's reputation, values, culture, and future connections. This is not possible for a newly reverted Muslim woman, as she has no

family support or any support system for her in her circumstances. This can have a negative impact on the Muslim family, as she has no support, and they become hesitant to choose her for their family. In traditional families, parents, grandparents, siblings, and uncles are involved in these matters to choose the spouse for their young people. This approach is taken by them to protect their youth. These families are cautious about the revert Muslim to the point of questioning how much she understands or follows Islamic law, how determined she is to maintain it with consistency, and if it is possible that she will fit into their family and relatives' traditions. Because of this, marriages of reverts get delayed and discouraged, even if they are sincere, practicing Muslims.

(Pakeeza, 2007).

1.2.2 Marital Expectations and Norms:

In Muslim communities, a married couple needs to have more than love and companionship. It is more about the couple's cultures' acceptance; they shape their new family, and family and relatives. In Muslim families, it is more known as the man to be the leader of the family, compared to other cultures. Islamic culture is highlighted. The expectation of the husband is to be the provider of the financial needs, while the wife is to take care of the household and teach their kids to be good Muslims, also be loyal and respectful, and solve issues emotionally and spiritually with mutual understanding. Families expect the same for their children to do the same moving forward, which brings stability to their next generation. Mostly, these families want ease, then training a person, teaching them, and they are not even sure if she can manage all of that, which is entirely different for her family system. Even if the reverted Muslimah is determined to change completely for the sake of Allāh, the hesitation from the family, spouse-to-be has a lot of hesitation to begin with, becomes the major barrier to reverted Muslims' marriage. (J, 2013).

1.2.2.1. Preference for Same-Ethnic Marriages

Preference is given to women who have the same culture, tradition, values, and language. To round it up, the same ethnic background matters to many people when choosing a girl for marriage, for the man himself or even the family, and for future generations to have the same language to understand and participate with ease. If bringing in an outsider who does not have the same language, tradition, or mindset to follow the same values and customs, it can not only create distance with grandparents but also with relatives. The same ethnic

background matters greatly in marriages, in choosing a spouse. This again leads to a drawback for reverts. It is not that it does not happen at all, but the chances of getting married are slim.

1.2.2.2 Traditional Gender Roles

Some men prefer that women stay at home, not work, and take care of the household. In many cases, gender roles are clearly defined, and the man's decision is often considered more authoritative than the woman's within the marriage. Meanwhile, other men may prefer that their wives also work and help share the financial responsibilities. However, in most Muslim family structures, the man typically wants his wife to stay at home, often as part of religious practice. (Parveen Azam Ali, 2020) Newly reverted women, on the other hand, often come from Western or different cultural backgrounds, where gender roles are more flexible, and women are encouraged to work and live independently. This difference in upbringing can place them at a disadvantage when seeking marriage in communities that expect traditional roles. Since gender roles vary between different lifestyles, these differences can often lead to misunderstandings, disagreements, and even arguments between spouses.

1.2.2.3. Cultural Compatibility Expectations

Though Islam allows marriage between people of all cultures and backgrounds - placing emphasis on a person's character, manners, and faith - many Muslim families treat cultural traditions and family expectations as if they are religious obligations. This cultural mindset often creates difficulties for newly reverted Muslim women seeking marriage.

Reverted women usually study Islam deeply and expect Muslim communities to prioritize Islamic principles and follow the correct path based on Shariah law. However, they are often surprised to find that in practice, many Muslim families place more importance on culture than religion. This gap between Islamic teachings and cultural reality can lead to failed marriage proposals and emotional discouragement.

In many cases, reverts face discrimination that resembles racism, where cultural background becomes a major factor in choosing a spouse. Women who were raised in non-Muslim families may be viewed as less desirable than those born and brought up in Muslim households. Revert sisters are sometimes unfairly seen as less committed or less trustworthy, even when they are practicing Islam sincerely.

Unfortunately, these incorrect expectations and cultural biases create serious obstacles for reverted Muslim women and make it more difficult for them to find a suitable marriage partner within the Muslim community. (Waqar Husain U. U., 2022)

1.2.3. Education and Religious Knowledge

Education and religious knowledge play a central role in shaping individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and decision-making processes, particularly in matters related to marriage and family life. In the context of reverted Muslim women, both secular education and Islamic understanding influence not only personal religious development but also how they are perceived by potential spouses, families, and the wider Muslim community. Religious knowledge, in particular, is essential for understanding marital rights and responsibilities, ethical conduct, and the spiritual objectives of marriage in Islam. At the same time, levels of formal education may affect expectations regarding compatibility, communication, and socio-economic stability. This section examines how education and religious knowledge shape marital prospects, social acceptance, and self-confidence among reverted Muslim women, and how these factors contribute to both opportunities and challenges in seeking marriage.

1.2.3.1. Importance of Islamic Education

A religiously learned wife is often seen as ideal in many Muslim families, as she is believed to provide proper Islamic upbringing for her children. A woman who has studied Islam is thought to possess more knowledge about patience, obedience, and religious duties. She is expected to study and teach the Qur'an and pass on Islamic values to the next generation. (Shatzmiller., 1996). For a newly reverted woman, this becomes a challenge. As she is still learning the basics of Islam, she may lack much of the religious knowledge that is typically expected. She must spend time learning, understanding, and applying Islamic teachings in her daily life. There is a high chance that she might miss out on certain aspects that a religiously educated wife can naturally offer in a Muslim household. This becomes a major difficulty for a revert woman when seeking marriage to a Muslim man. (Brandt, 2021)

1.2.3.2. Perceived Religious Understanding of Reverts

As reverted Muslims are not raised in a Muslim family, there is a mindset among people who were brought up in Muslim families that reverted women have a different way of perceiving Islamic knowledge, or that because they were not raised in a Muslim family, their upbringing

will have a negative impact. Although not all born Muslims follow Islam as consistently or seriously as many new Muslims do, this fact is often overlooked. Many individuals raised in Muslim families take their religion for granted and assume they already know everything. However, in reality, many of them lack proper Islamic knowledge, do not correct their own Qur'anic recitation errors, and often follow cultural practices or religious innovations (bid'ah) without realizing it. (Brandt, 2021). Nevertheless, reverted women still face the burden of being judged unfairly. Despite their sincere efforts and commitment to learning Islam, they are sometimes seen as less suitable for marriage because they are beginners in religious practice. This creates an imbalance in expectations and leads to further challenges in the marriage process for newly reverted Muslim women. (Azarudin Awang A. C., Challenges of Muallaf in Building Muslim's Identity in Malaysia, 2022)

1.2.3.3. Level of Secular Education

Sometimes when women get higher education from a secular education system, it leads to women becoming so independent that they believe marriage is not important and that they can do everything on their own. (Menon, 1979)Their lifestyle is affected, and their studies in different fields such as music, dance, fashion, air-hostess training, or even becoming doctors, engineers, pilots, architects, or chartered accountants require them to be outspoken and to interact with non-mahram men. These women, though born in Muslim families, tend to move away from Islam. Again, women like these give the wrong impression to reverts who did not have any such restrictions and are also highly qualified. Muslim families may feel that revert women will follow the same path as those born in Muslim households. (Kawu, 2024) These patterns are observed in many countries such as Turkey, Pakistan, Gambia, the UAE, and other parts of the world as well. On the other hand, some people appreciate educated women. They want them to support the family, be intellectual, and be capable of running the household in a better way. However, because people do not follow Islam as they should, they are more inclined toward what their culture presents to them. Sometimes, having a good secular education has a positive effect on a woman's chance of getting married, and sometimes it has a negative impact. (Umar Daraz, 2021)

1.2.4. Economic and Financial Factors

Education and religious knowledge play a significant role in shaping perceptions, expectations, and marital prospects within Muslim societies. Religious understanding influences attitudes toward family life, gender roles, and moral responsibility, while secular

education affects lifestyle choices, independence, and social interaction. For reverted Muslim women, the intersection of religious learning and educational background presents unique challenges, as they are often evaluated through standards formed by cultural norms and religious expectations. Differences in levels of Islamic knowledge, perceptions of religious commitment, and assumptions about education may significantly influence how reverted women are viewed as potential marriage partners. This section examines the importance of Islamic education, societal perceptions of reverted women's religious understanding, and the impact of secular education on marriage prospects.

1.2.4.1. Dowry (Mahr) Expectations

Mahr is a gift given to the bride by the groom. Allah says in the Quran, "And give the women their dowers as a free gift." (International S. , Chapter An-Nisa, Verse 4, 1997) It is her right to have that gift. (Raihanah Azahari, 2015) Some people make lavish demands in the name of dowry (mahr), which burdens the men. In Islam, it is encouraged to give as much as one can afford, but it is a religious practice, so one needs to give what the bride asks for. Also, sometimes there is family pressure to ask for at least a certain amount for the bride according to customs. (Ferdousi, 2019) On the other hand, when there is a revert, people assume that since she does not have knowledge about it or does not have family to inform her about it, they unjustly give her less dowry (mahr). It is not always the case, but in every community, there are black sheep found everywhere. For reverts, that becomes a challenge whether the right sources are given to her, correct knowledge at the correct time or even sometimes, they give up their dowry (mahr) just to get married. Though Islam teaches to treat everyone equally with the same respect, sometimes culture overpowers and undermines by such expectations and unfairness, especially when one does not have family support or guidance to understand. (Showkat, 2022).

1.2.4.2. Financial Stability and Independence

Earning money is considered the most important factor; if both spouses earn well, they can live a good, luxurious life. Meanwhile, in some cultures, if only one earn the its just survival; this is considered a deep impact, which gives the reason in some cultures that both should earn, and for earning, both need to be educated. Women who have a degree and can earn well are more likely to be chosen for marriage, so they can have financial stability. It is noted that women with a diploma have a lower rating for marriage than women with degrees. (Karney,

2021). It affects the reverted Muslim women as well, considering that their worldly education matters.

1.2.4.3. Housing and Family Support Systems

After marriage, or even before it, a wife needs to have a supportive family. If her rights are taken away or if there is pressure from the in-laws, her own family can take a stand. Sometimes, family ties help in building a house or offering support if any problem occurs. Without a family, the entire burden falls solely on the husband's side. Even if she wants to take a few days and go live with her mother, she cannot—especially if her family is non-Muslim. The husband or his family may view that as a negative influence on their son or future grandchildren. This becomes a drawback, as when the reverted woman meets her family and friends and sees them doing acts she knows are sinful, she cannot expect them to stop. These situations impact the household and become a setback not only for the revert herself but also potentially for her in-laws. This can lead to a lack of marriage proposals or result in marriage problems and ongoing conflicts. (Azarudin Awang A. C., Challenges of Muallaf in Building Muslim's Identity in Malaysia, 2022)

1.2.5. Social Capital and Integration

Social capital and community integration play a critical role in shaping social and marital opportunities within Muslim societies. Access to supportive networks, community knowledge, and trusted social connections often determines how easily individuals can navigate cultural, religious, and family expectations. For reverted Muslim women, limited social capital presents unique challenges, as they frequently lack family ties, mentorship, or community support that can facilitate learning, guidance, and introductions to potential spouses. Additionally, barriers such as ethnic and racial preferences further restrict their ability to integrate fully into established Muslim networks. This section explores the importance of community connections and the impact of ethnic and racial exclusion on the social integration of reverted women seeking marriage, highlighting the ways in which these factors influence their opportunities and experiences.

1.2.5.1. Community Connections and Networking

Community connections are one of the strongest networks that most Muslim families have. These connections include friends, cousins, their friends, local mosques, and Islamic schools, where people are surrounded by social networks. Through these community ties, families

often share information or connect potential compatible spouses when individuals reach marriageable age. Meanwhile, newly reverted Muslims often lack such community support, friends, and family. Sometimes, they do not even have access to mosques or community centres to help them learn basic practices like Salah (prayer) or Wudu (ablution), relying instead on online resources. Searching for a husband online can be difficult and risky, as very few people turn out to be as trustworthy as they present themselves. This lack of community connection and networking is a significant setback for reverted Muslim women seeking a spouse. (Azarudin Awang R. A., 2022)

1.2.5.2. Ethnic and Racial Exclusion

Allāh states in the Qur'an that all human beings are from one origin: Adam and Hawwa (peace be upon them). Differences in ethnicity or tribe are meant for identification, not superiority. Piety (taqwa) is the true measure of a person's worth in the sight of Allāh, as mentioned in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13 (International S. , The Qur'ān: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings, 1997). Yet, despite this clear guidance, ethnic and racial backgrounds are often prioritized when choosing a spouse. Most families prefer that their daughter-in-law be from the same language group or country, and outsiders are not readily welcomed. This becomes a major obstacle for reverted women, especially those coming from Black, White, Asian, or American backgrounds, making marriage more difficult. As a result, they often experience feelings of isolation and frustration. (Jasmin Puah, 2024)

1.2.5.3. Stigma and Social Judgments

In the Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him) final sermon (Khutbat al-Wada'), he reminded the ummah that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and no non-Arab is superior to an Arab, except by piety (taqwa). (Hanbal, 2001). The true concept of Islam often feels lost in today's era, where cultural influences have overshadowed the pure teachings of the faith. In many cases, these cultural mixtures have distorted the perception of certain values, leading to practices and judgments that Islam actually discourages. One of the most concerning aspects is how many Muslims have begun to distance themselves from deep engagement with their religion, believing they already know enough, especially in comparison to reverts (new Muslims). This mindset fosters a sense of superiority, which stands in stark contrast to the humility and brotherhood that Islam emphasizes. Instead of nurturing unity and learning from one another, this attitude can create division, something far removed from the spirit of Islam. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., 2025). Reverted Muslim

women often face negative social judgment because they do not come from traditional Muslim backgrounds. They may be perceived as having a lower social status due to the absence of a Muslim family network, limited community connections, or a lack of religious knowledge. As a result, they are frequently looked down upon and judged unfairly. These negative perceptions contribute to a distorted image of the Muslim community, where reverts may feel isolated and rejected. Such experiences can significantly impact their ability to find a suitable spouse, as they struggle to gain acceptance within the community. (Mukaddam, 2017)

1.2.6. Legal and Immigration Status

Legal and immigration status represents a critical factor influencing the social and marital experiences of reverted Muslim women, particularly those who relocate to new countries following marriage proposals or contracts. Challenges related to residency, citizenship, and legal recognition can significantly impact a woman’s ability to access housing, education, healthcare, and employment, as well as her overall sense of security and independence. These barriers not only affect the reverted women themselves but also place practical and emotional burdens on their spouses and families. Moreover, limited legal status often necessitates reliance on community support or aid, creating additional layers of dependency. This section examines the implications of residency, citizenship, and reliance on community resources, highlighting how these legal and structural constraints complicate the marriage process and broader integration for newly reverted Muslim women.

1.2.6.1. Residency and Citizenship

There are many instances where non-Muslim individuals accept Islam after studying it online, often through the support of online Muslim communities. These digital platforms frequently provide guidance, educational resources, and moral support, helping new reverts embrace the faith. In many cases, newly reverted Muslim women receive marriage proposals through these platforms, and some even enter into marriage contracts (nikah) online. (Mursyid Fikri, 2024)

However, a major challenge that arises in such situations is related to residency and citizenship status. When these women travel to their spouse's country, they often face legal difficulties such as lacking a resident visa or being categorized as refugees or immigrants. Without full legal residency, they are unable to access essential resources like housing,

education, healthcare, or employment. This lack of legal recognition significantly limits their ability to live with security and independence. (Monica Accordini, 2018)

These challenges not only affect the women themselves but also create practical and emotional burdens for their spouses. As a result, many men become hesitant to marry a revert who faces legal and immigration barriers. The combination of being a revert and lacking legal status contributes to greater social and financial uncertainty, further complicating the marriage process. This makes residency and citizenship issues a significant factor in the overall marital challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women. (Chen, 2022)

1.2.6.2. Dependency on Community Aid

When reverted Muslim women shift to a new country after getting married, whether to a Muslim country or another country, their laws make it difficult for them to support their husband in the household. They have to rely completely on their spouse, which burdens the spouse financially and emotionally. Sometimes, they become dependent on aid provided by Muslim communities, relying on others' help, which brings distress and difficulty. This again puts pressure on men to rethink choosing a wife for themselves, as stability and independence are highly valued in a marriage partner. Getting aid from the community makes them feel shy and isolated from the community. (Chen, 2022)

1.2.6.3. Legal Vulnerability in Marital Rights

The disadvantages for reverted women marrying in other countries do not end with citizenship issues. When they are unfamiliar with the laws or when their marriage is only conducted through an Islamic marriage contract (nikah) ceremony in the mosque without official legal registration, they may not receive support from the community or legal system in matters such as custody or waiting period (‘idda) payments if they get divorced. Although the Islamic marriage contract (nikah) is religiously valid, these women cannot easily pursue legal cases in civil courts, making it difficult for them to defend their rights. There is a high risk that they could face deportation since they are not only new to Islam but also unfamiliar with the country’s laws. Additionally, language barriers often hinder their ability to communicate effectively with authorities, further complicating their legal situation. (Welchman, 2007)

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore the social, cultural, and religious challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. By understanding these challenges, the study aims to propose actionable solutions for creating supportive environments that help these women navigate the marriage process while adhering to Islamic principles. The specific objectives of the study are:

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To describe the socio-economic characteristics of newly reverted Muslim women in the study area.
2. To identify the available sources and resources for gaining Islamic knowledge in their environment.
3. To analyse how factors such as age, language barriers, safety, and privacy concerns affect their ability to find suitable spouses.
4. To examine how the lack of community centres and the absence of a supportive Muslim environment affect their ability to build networks and access Islamic marriage guidance.
5. To assess the impact of exposure to non-Islamic dating practices (fitnah of dating) on their ability to maintain Sharia-compliant relationship standards.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of current marriage apps and digital platforms in facilitating Islamic, culturally sensitive matches for reverted Muslim women.
7. To explore the availability and quality of marriage counselling and support groups specifically tailored to the needs of reverted Muslim women.
8. To investigate how the lack of nearby masjids and absence of guidance from local Imams affects the Islamic marriage contract (Nikkah) process and clarity in marital expectations.
9. To identify practical strategies and support mechanisms that help reverted Muslim women maintain their Islamic identity and faith while navigating the marriage search.

10. To examine the impact of Islamophobia on the marriage prospects of reverted Muslim women, both within and outside of the Muslim community.

11. To explore the overall challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking Sharia-compliant marriage, and how these intersect across social, religious, and cultural domains.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the newly reverted Muslim women in the study area?
2. What are the available resources for gaining Islami Knowledge?
3. Age, language, safety, and privacy barriers affecting their potential partners
4. How does the lack of community centres affect gaining the correct knowledge, and friendly Muslims around them affect their marriage prospects?
5. What role does the fitnah of dating play in their lives?
6. How effective are current marriage apps and channels in facilitating Sharia-compliant marriages?
7. How many marriage counselling support groups are there for reverts and uncertainty in religious practices in marriage?
8. Does the lack of Masjids near them affect the role of an imam in setting clear expectations and helping them with their Islamic marriage contract (nikkah)?
9. What strategies can help these reverted Muslim women maintain their faith and find suitable spouses?
10. How does Islamophobia impact their search for a spouse?

11. What are the main challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage?

1.5 Hypotheses

Add an introductory sentence before listing the hypotheses Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges faced by the respondents in seeking marriage and their accessibility to Islamic community resources in the study area.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges faced by the respondents in seeking marriage and their socioeconomic characteristics.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The journey of newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage is a complex and multifaceted process, often influenced by various societal, cultural, and religious factors. These women face distinct challenges that differ from those experienced by individuals born into Islam, particularly when it comes to finding a suitable spouse who shares their faith and values. While some challenges are universal, such as cultural differences and social expectations, reverted Muslim women also encounter unique obstacles, including social isolation, lack of community support, and the impact of Islamophobia. Additionally, the lack of accessible Islamic resources, such as community centres and masjids, further complicates their search for a compatible partner. This literature review explores the existing studies on the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women in the marriage process, the limitations of current support systems, and the impact of external factors like Islamophobia and dating practices. By examining these issues, the review aims to provide a deeper understanding of the obstacles these women face and highlight areas where support and solutions are needed to help them navigate the complex path to marriage.

2.0.1 Purpose and Scope of the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to critically examine existing scholarly work related to the experiences of newly reverted Muslim women, with particular emphasis on the challenges they face when seeking marriage within Muslim communities. Marriage occupies a central position in Islamic social life, and for women who newly embrace Islam, navigating marital expectations often involves complex social, cultural, and religious adjustments. This review seeks to situate the present study within the broader academic discourse by identifying key themes, debates, and findings relevant to revert women, marriage practices, community integration, and faith-based challenges.

The scope of this review encompasses interdisciplinary literature drawn from sociology, Islamic studies, gender studies, anthropology, and social psychology. Particular attention is given to studies that explore issues such as social isolation, lack of community support, cultural compatibility, Islamophobia, gendered expectations, and the role of religious institutions in facilitating marriage. The review also considers emerging scholarship on

digital marriage platforms and their relevance to Muslim populations, especially reverts who may lack traditional family-mediated pathways to marriage.

To ensure relevance to contemporary social contexts, this review primarily focuses on literature published between 2010 and 2025, while selectively including earlier foundational studies where they provide essential theoretical or conceptual grounding. The geographical scope of the literature is global, with studies drawn from Western societies, Muslim-majority countries, and transnational Muslim communities. This broad scope reflects the diverse contexts in which reverted Muslim women live and seek marriage.

By outlining the purpose and scope of the reviewed literature, this section clarifies the boundaries of the chapter and establishes a focused framework for analysing existing research. The review does not aim to provide an exhaustive account of all studies on Muslim marriage; rather, it prioritizes literature that directly informs the specific experiences, constraints, and needs of newly reverted Muslim women. In doing so, it highlights areas of scholarly consensus, identifies gaps in existing research, and lays the groundwork for the empirical investigation undertaken in this study.

2.0.2 Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

The literature reviewed in this chapter was identified through a systematic and structured search process to ensure academic rigor and relevance. Multiple academic databases and sources were consulted, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, ResearchGate, and peer-reviewed journals in the fields of Islamic studies, sociology, gender studies, and religious studies. In addition to journal articles, relevant academic books, edited volumes, doctoral theses, and reputable institutional reports were also examined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

A range of keywords and search terms were used in various combinations to locate relevant studies. These included terms such as “Muslim reverts,” “female converts to Islam,” “reverted Muslim women,” “Islam and marriage,” “Muslim marriage practices,” “Islamophobia,” “gender and Islam,” “community support,” and “Sharia-compliant marriage.” Boolean operators were employed to refine searches and ensure that results were closely aligned with the focus of the study. Reference lists of key articles were also reviewed to identify additional relevant sources that may not have appeared in the initial searches.

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure consistency and relevance in the selection of literature. Studies were included if they addressed the social, cultural, religious, psychological, or structural experiences of Muslim women, with particular emphasis on reverts or converts to Islam. Literature that examined marriage, family formation, community integration, gender norms, or faith-based challenges within Muslim contexts was prioritized. Studies focusing specifically on reverted women were given precedence, although research on born-Muslim populations was included where it provided useful comparative insights or theoretical frameworks relevant to the study.

Studies were excluded if they did not engage with issues related to marriage, gender, or religious identity, or if they focused exclusively on theological debates without addressing lived social experiences. Non-academic sources lacking scholarly credibility were also excluded, except where they were used illustratively to contextualize contemporary challenges faced by reverts. While the primary emphasis was on literature published from 2010 onward, earlier works were selectively incorporated when they offered foundational perspectives or were frequently cited within the field.

Through this search strategy and selection process, the literature review was constructed to reflect a balanced, focused, and critical engagement with existing scholarship. This approach ensures that the reviewed studies meaningfully inform the present research and provide a solid academic foundation for analysing the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage.

2.1 Challenges Faced by Newly Reverted Muslim Women in Seeking Marriage

A significant body of literature highlights the unique challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in their search for marriage. Reverted women often struggle with social isolation due to the intersection of their newly adopted faith and their previous cultural and familial backgrounds. (Nazia Zaman and Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi, 2019, p. 18) Reverts frequently encounter difficulties in integrating within established Muslim communities, which are often comprised of individuals who were born into the faith. This lack of integration can lead to feelings of alienation and makes it harder for reverted women to find a spouse who aligns with their religious and cultural values. Furthermore, the absence of

community support and Islamic marriage guidance often leaves them vulnerable to un-Islamic dating practices, as they may lack proper resources or knowledge to navigate the process of finding a compatible, Sharia-compliant partner. (Vroon-Najem, 2019, pp. 33-51)

2.1.1 Identity Reconstruction After Conversion:

Starting everything again from scratch when beginning with religious conversion, it is not only about beliefs but also learning step by step to change into a whole new identity. When reverting to Islam, women need to reconsider every aspect of their new life, including previous habits, social roles, and values. To practice while learning side by side and learn how to see herself in this new identity. This change will not only affect herself but the people around her, like friends, colleagues, and family members. She has double the pressure of answering and interacting with them about her change and how Muslims see her while she learns and practices gradually; this interaction is very crucial for the reverted Muslim women. While they need someone to support them, at times it gets complicated to adjust to the behaviour in the social environment with these different relationships.

After taking the shahada, women's change compared to men's change is quite different; she gets highlighted easily as her dressing changes, and this obvious change in appearance is noticed by the community through her daily practice and interactions with both Muslims and non-Muslims. This sudden change not only makes the surrounding people see her differently, but they will give her all sorts of advice, which might not be correct at times in her situation, nor asked for, to which the reverted Muslim tries to fit in with what people are telling her, instead of figuring out where she conflicts and taking time to fully accept, to be strong enough to change and conquer her own nervousness and thoughts about each change, to be able to answer people about what she is doing. Doing this for herself is important to make herself strong enough to study more to satisfy herself first so she can answer others about her change, instead of trying to follow other people giving her the perfect Muslimah concept. Normally, one should learn gradually; this social pressure gives her no time to adapt with time, but forces her into the new identity.

This new identity of the reverted Muslim women changing according to Islam is very challenging; she feels conflicted between two lifestyles from the previous one. The new one is not accepted by their friends, family members, and colleagues; they find it hard to accept their new change, trying to bring them back to what they were, unable to comprehend their

religious duties towards Allāh. the same for Muslims around her, where the reverted Muslim women feel like outcasts due to language change, ethnicity, and cultural differences. With these two completely different people's points of view, it leads her to be lonely and squeezed in between, with ambiguity in emotions. This can lead to wrong decisions when choosing her marriage partner.

Newly reverted Muslim women still need to learn a great deal as they adapt to a new identity after converting. Marriage is a significant commitment to add to their lives, and there are many aspects to learn, particularly duties towards Islam, including family involvement and community expectations.

Reverted women may feel overwhelmed and nervous with so much to learn and may feel less prepared. What they learned throughout their earlier life compared to what they are learning now is sometimes entirely different, especially regarding the role of being a wife, having a guardian as a Walī, which they might not even have as a family member, and the cultural differences in marriage traditions where they may get married. There is also a mindset that if they get married to a Muslim, they might feel accepted by the Muslim community and become more stable in their learning, with guidance becoming easier. As a result, they may feel pressured to get married faster instead of taking time to learn, build confidence, and prepare themselves for marriage as a new change in their lives, due to pressure from family members, colleagues, and both Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Taken altogether, it is understood that when they newly revert to Islam, these Muslim women's perspective on marriage changes. Changing into a new mode of being is perplexing. Previously, their own opinions were final, whether good or bad. Now, they need to focus on the Islamic point of view relating to marriage and cultural differences. The role of a woman in marriage is different from that of a man. Previously, they were responsible for tasks typically given to men, such as earning, taking care of themselves, and making their own decisions without seeking permission. Accepting this change affects them emotionally and psychologically.

2.1.2 Psychological Adjustment and Sense of Belonging

When People from one religion change their religious belief to another religious belief are commonly known as converts in previous research. (Fadhilatunnisa, 2022) You can see the usage of this word in many disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and religious

studies, as this word is generally neutral. (Langewiesche, 2020) The term "revert" refers to returning to the original state, which Islam describes as people returning to their origin (H. M. Ghalib, 2022). Allāh says in the Qur'an, in chapter Ar-Rum, verse 30, that every child is born with an inclination toward believing in one Allāh. (Sahih International, 1997)
However, revert and convert are understood as one thing in the sense that they refer to a change in path to enter Islam according to different populations. Newly reverted Muslim women is understood in this dissertation's study, as it aligns with Islamic understanding while also engaging with the broader academic literature that discusses converts.

Those women who have accepted Islam recently are known as newly reverted women. The current study shows that new reverts go through many sudden changes in their lives, not only emotionally but also mentally and psychologically, involving identity change through a lot of learning into a new life and a new self. During this phase, individuals actively acquire religious knowledge, restructure daily practices, and renegotiate social relationships. Experts claim that the first five years of newly reverted Muslim women are a sensitive period in their lives; they have many questions, much confusion, and sometimes feel isolated under great pressure. (Jerry Wilson, 2025) Only newly reverted Muslim women face these challenges, while Muslims who reverted many years ago have adjusted and do not experience the same pressure as newly reverted Muslim women.

This specifically focuses on women, as they have greater differences in accepting Islam compared to men. (Mitchell, 2021) They can easily go to the mosque; they don't need a Walī (guardian), and they don't need to wear hijab, which women need to do, highlighting them outwardly after accepting Islam. (Kadir, 2024) This puts them under direct pressure to apply Islamic rulings faster, as they get judged by the community. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., Challenges of Religious Integration among Indigenous Muslim Converts (Mualaf) in Sabah, Malaysia, 2025).

The difference between Muslims born into Muslim families and newly reverted Muslim women is family support, which newly reverted Muslim women do not have; for that reason, they also face different circumstances. (Paul Mitchell, 2021) Newly reverted Muslim women have no idea what marriage is like from an Islamic perspective, as they lack knowledge about it and have never seen or experienced it through their own families, as they do not come from a Muslim background. This makes them open to problems and feelings of insecurity.

(Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., Challenges of Religious Integration among Indigenous Muslim Converts (Mualaf) in Sabah, Malaysia, 2025). Sometimes newly reverted Muslim women feel that if they get married, they will be considered more stable Muslims and also accepted by the community around them. To get that acceptance from society, they may rush into marriage; however, this step in life can make them feel even more overwhelmed, as they are already under pressure while adjusting to the mental and social changes they are facing after accepting Islam. (Abdul Aziz, 2024)

All newly reverted Muslim women are not from the same group, age, or society, so they go through different situations in handling every step in their life after accepting Islam because of the different backgrounds they come from. (Azarudin Awang A. C., 2025) Their conversion becomes different from one another as newly reverted Muslim women because their life experiences, such as different levels of education, their traditions, heritage backgrounds, and lifestyles, influence them. (Anna Piela, 2022) Sometimes newly reverted Muslim women find an easy and helpful community, which helps them in learning and taking things slowly to benefit from the learning without any pressure, but not every place has the same level of helpful community. (Muhamad Azfar bin Suhaimi N. S., 2025) Some communities are very judgmental, and sometimes there are no communities nearby to help them in their learning, and the newly reverted Muslim women remain in isolation due to lack of community or a Judgemental community, which puts pressure on them in their learning and adapting to new practices. (Ermita Zakiyah, 2023). Till now, it is quite clear that newly reverted Muslim women face different circumstances and have different challenges to face, and it is not possible to generalize the same thing for everyone. In consideration of this diversity, the study adopts a flexible definition for newly reverted Muslim women, which is grounded in previous research but is carefully designed to account for individual backgrounds, life experiences, and personal circumstances, which help in deciding the marriage partner to be chosen for them accordingly. By taking this approach, the study can present participants' experiences, highlighting the differences accurately and the ways in which women change their lifestyle after conversion.

By clearly defining newly reverted Muslim women, this section identifies the specific group under study and explains why their experiences in seeking marriage require focused academic attention. Establishing this definition helps clarify the social and personal context in which these women navigate their lives following their conversion. It also provides an important

foundation for examining their psychological adjustment and sense of belonging, which are explored in greater detail in the following section.

2.1.3 Loss of Family Mediation in Marriage

Psychological adjustment plays an important role in the lives of newly reverted Muslim women, as it influences many aspects of their daily lives after conversion. This conversion is not limited to personal faith or belief, but also affects outward changes and influences such as how they dress, how they present themselves, and how they express their new identity in social settings. At the same time, they should learn how to carry these changes within themselves and while interacting with the communities. This psychological adjustment involves developing a sense of belonging as women move from their former identity to a new one. This transition often takes place within the same social circles and communities they had before conversion, which can create emotional challenges and uncertainty. As a result, newly reverted Muslim women may experience tension between their old self and their new self while trying to feel accepted, understood, and confident in their changed lifestyle. (Muhajir Al-Fairusy, 2024)

Many newly reverted Muslim women report that their social support systems, such as family, friends, or close community members, don’t accept them after they revert to Islam. The truth is that these people often do not want to understand or support their decision. Loss of this support weakens these relationships, which can lead to emotional challenges, such as stress, loneliness, and feelings of abandonment. During this period, receiving guidance and understanding is especially important, yet newly reverted Muslim women may struggle to feel secure and confident in their new identity. This process can make them feel isolated, and they may have to find new ways to connect with supportive communities or build a sense of belonging in their social life while adjusting to their religious and personal changes. (Kharomah, 2025)

At the same time, establishing a sense of belonging within Muslim communities can be challenging for newly reverted Muslim women. Although mosques and Islamic groups may serve as important entry points into the Muslim community, newly reverted Muslim women may still experience feelings of exclusion due to cultural, ethnic, or linguistic differences. These barriers can prevent full integration and may lead to a perception of being tolerated rather than fully accepted. The resulting sense of partial belonging can intensify

psychological strain and hinder emotional stability. (Annisa Nursyifa, Mosque-Based Islamic Education for Converts Through Community-Centered Programs, 2025)

The absence of strong emotional and social support during this adjustment period may increase susceptibility to anxiety, self-doubt, and confusion regarding religious practice and personal expectations. For reverted women, the pressure to demonstrate religious commitment outwardly while internally still adjusting can further exacerbate psychological stress. This imbalance between external expectations and internal readiness highlights the fragility of the early post-conversion phase. (Taufik Taufik, 2025)

Psychological adjustment and feeling a sense of belonging are very important for newly reverted Muslim women when they are looking for a marriage partner. Feeling emotionally insecure, having little support from family or the community, and being unsure about their place in the Muslim social structure can affect their confidence in pursuing marriage and discussing what they want in a spouse. Without feeling accepted and emotionally stable, these women may find it harder to make thoughtful and confident decisions about marriage. (Nazri Yasin, 2020)

2.1.4 Social Support Systems and Community Integration

One of the most important factors in the lives of newly reverted Muslim women is social support. It is not only important but vital during the period following their acceptance of Islam. Social support provides them with a sense of having someone they can turn to for guidance, ask questions, and discuss the challenges and inner struggles they may experience during their adjustment. This support may come from family members, friends, mentors, peers, Islamic community centres, or the wider Muslim community. The presence of such support can ease the transition process, while its absence may increase feelings of confusion, isolation, and emotional difficulty. (Kharomah, 2025)

Correct Islamic knowledge is usually learned through lectures or from teachers who are trained to teach Islam in mosques, Islamic centres, or organised community groups. However, in some cases, reverted women may not receive structured religious education, and instead are taught practices that community members believe to be Islamic. (Niina Putkonen, 2025) Because religious knowledge is often learned through family traditions and cultural practices, some community members may assume that certain cultural norms are Islamic, which can result in reverted women receiving guidance that reflects culture rather than core

religious teachings. (Annisa Nursyifa, Mosque-Based Islamic Education for Converts Through Community-Centered Programs., 2025)

Joining a Muslim community can be challenging for newly reverted Muslim women due to cultural and ethnic differences. In some communities, strong cultural traditions may limit openness and make it difficult for those from different backgrounds to feel included. As a result, reverted women may struggle to build close relationships or develop a sense of genuine belonging. Their participation may therefore remain limited to formal activities, such as attending prayers or community events, without forming deeper emotional connections. In such environments, even acts of worship like prayer may feel uncomfortable or emotionally distant, as uneasiness within the community can affect spiritual focus and the ability to feel a connection with Allāh. When reverted women do not feel accepted as full members of the community, the effectiveness of community support is significantly reduced. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., Challenges of Religious Integration among Indigenous Muslim, 2025)

Insufficient and inconsistent support structures contribute to long-term difficulties for newly reverted Muslim women, particularly in navigating marriage-related matters. Conversations about the kind of spouse they hope for, the emotional or spiritual connection they want, or their expectations of marriage can feel especially difficult. Often, they worry that their questions will not be understood, or that they may be judged or looked down upon because of cultural or social attitudes within the community. As a result, some choose to keep their concerns to themselves rather than seek guidance, even when support systems appear to be available. When there is no safe and welcoming space to speak honestly, reverted women are left to manage complex religious and social expectations on their own, which can place them at a disadvantage when making important marriage decisions and increase the risk of pressure, confusion, or unsuitable choices. (Abdul Ghafar Don at el, 2023)

2.1.5 Emotional Vulnerability and Risk of Exploitation

As explained earlier, women who accept Islam may be particularly vulnerable during the early stages of their journey, as they are still learning and adjusting. Many reverted women strongly desire acceptance and inclusion within the Muslim community, especially when they experience rejection or distance from family members, friends, or colleagues. In the absence of support from their previous social networks, this desire for belonging may intensify, leading them to seek reassurance, guidance, or protection from within the Muslim

community. At the same time, some individuals, online groups, or community spaces present themselves as sources of emotional or religious support. Newly reverted Muslim women may place trust in these sources without being able to assess whether they are knowledgeable, ethical, or properly guided. This situation can result in heavy reliance on others without adequate safeguards or structured support systems in place. (Al-Fairusy, 2024)

Many newly reverted Muslim women do not have sufficient or accurate Islamic knowledge about marriage. The support they receive may be incomplete, misleading, or influenced by personal interpretations, and in some cases, they may feel hesitant to ask questions. At times, their sources of support may themselves lack the necessary knowledge to provide proper guidance. Because newly reverted Muslim women are still learning and adjusting, they are particularly vulnerable and may be more easily exposed to harm, especially regarding the rights and responsibilities of wives and husbands in Islam. As a result, some women may be encouraged into marriages that are not suitable for them or may enter marriage without full understanding or genuine consent. Power imbalances, incorrect religious information, and the absence of someone to advocate on behalf of the woman further increase these risks. (Moors, 2025)

Religious and cultural expectations placed on women can increase emotional stress after conversion. Reverted women are often expected to quickly adopt qualities such as obedience, modesty, and readiness for marriage. These expectations may be imposed before the woman has enough time to learn, emotionally adjust, or feel confident in her faith. When expectations are enforced too soon, women may feel pressured to agree or comply, even if it affects their emotional health or personal freedom. This pressure can prevent them from making choices that truly reflect their readiness or well-being. (Phenomenological investigation of negative attitudes towards marriage in female students, 2025)
Recognizing emotional vulnerability is key to understanding the marriage experiences of reverted Muslim women. These issues show why protective systems, ethical guidance, and accountability within communities are necessary. Communities have a responsibility to ensure that support is safe, respectful, and based on correct knowledge. Addressing emotional vulnerability helps protect reverted women from harm and exploitation. It also supports healthier, more informed, and more balanced marriage decisions within an Islamic framework. (Muhamad Azfar bin Suhaimi N. S., 2025)

2.2 The Lack of Community Centres and Social Support Networks

The lack of community centres and supportive networks for reverted Muslim women is another barrier in their search for a suitable spouse. Many women face challenges in accessing the necessary Islamic knowledge and finding friendly Muslims who can provide guidance, which emphasizes that this lack of community infrastructure significantly hampers their ability to gain correct Islamic knowledge and form relationships that could lead to marriage. (Karimullah, The role of mosques as centers for education and social engagement in Islamic communities., 2023, p. 163)This lack of support often exacerbates the challenges faced by reverted women, as they may not have access to local masjids, where religious leaders and marriage guidance programs could provide the mentorship and guidance they need. In turn, the absence of these networks isolates reverted women from potential marital prospects and increases the difficulty of finding a partner who shares their faith and values. (Karimullah, The role of mosques as centers for education and social engagement in Islamic communities., 2023, p. 157)

2.2.1 Role of Mosques and Religious Institutions

Historically, mosques functioned as centres for education, where Islamic knowledge was taught, and as spaces for community consultation and decision-making. This is the actual purpose of mosques: to provide social and spiritual security and a welcoming space for newly reverted Muslim women. (Bakar, 2024) They also played a vital role in addressing social needs, including welfare and conflict resolution. (Ayyad, 2024) In the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Mosques were the place where community was built; mosques were a hub for connecting with Allāh. In Surah An-Nur, it indicates that mosques are not merely physical structures but institutions raised for ongoing guidance, learning, and spiritual development, which scholars explain includes teaching and community nurturing (International T. b., 1997) (Book: Al-Qur’ān, Chapter: Surah An-Nur, Verse 36). Through prayers, Islamic education, and connection. (Dr. Sajjad Ahmad, 2024) In Muslim societies, mosques facilitate family matters such as marriage by providing guidance, matchmaking support, and religious counselling for nikāḥ. This helped ensure that marriages were formed within an Islamic ethical framework. (Ashraf, 2025)

Islamic tradition views mosques as places where individuals seek advice and support during important life stages. The transition into marriage is one such stage where religious guidance and community involvement are especially important. (Ahmed Z. , 2024)

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping the experiences of reverted women within mosques. Many mosques reflect the cultural practices, languages, and social norms of dominant ethnic groups within the community. (Nyhagen, 2019)While these cultural expressions are not inherently problematic, they can unintentionally create environments in which reverted women feel like outsiders. Differences in dress, language, social etiquette, or family background may make it difficult for reverts to feel fully included. (Jerry Wilson, 2025) Over time, this sense of cultural distance can weaken their attachment to mosque communities and limit their access to informal networks that often facilitate marriage introductions. (Turner, 2019)

Newly reverted Muslim women often lack Muslim family members and friends who are connected to the Muslim community and can assist them in finding a suitable spouse for marriage. This absence of religious and social support is one of the most serious challenges faced by newly reverted women. In contrast, women born into Muslim families usually benefit from existing family and community relationships, where elders and trusted individuals are involved in guiding the marriage process. These individuals help by checking character, discussing compatibility, and ensuring that the marriage is approached in a manner consistent with Islamic values and social norms. For newly reverted women, the lack of such support makes the search for a potential spouse much more difficult. In this situation, mosques and community centres can play an important role by bringing people together and creating spaces where relationships and trust develop over time. (Alcones, 2023)Through regular interaction, community activities, and religious gatherings, mosques help individuals build connections that can naturally lead to marriage opportunities. Such environments make it easier for reverted women to seek marriage in a safe, respectful, and Islamically appropriate way, reducing both isolation and risk. However, in reality, many mosques do not provide structured support for marriage, leaving reverted women to navigate the process independently. (Foundation, 2019)Without guidance from community elders or formal support systems, they may face risks, such as meeting unsuitable partners or encountering unsafe situations. (Mohammad Nasir, 2024).

When mosques and Islamic community centres don't provide support, they should, newly reverted Muslim women often feel disappointed and alone. They may turn to the internet, websites, and social media channels to find answers. However, because they are unsure what to look for, where to look, and what is correct to learn, they might receive wrong information from unreliable sources, which could expose them to unsafe situations. (Nurjannah, 2024) In places where Muslims are fewer in number, the mosques they build are also smaller and have limited resources. Depending on the community's needs and financial constraints, they might not be able to construct larger mosques that provide broader support. (Ziad Baydoun, 2025) Such mosques may be used only for prayer. In other areas, where the Muslim community is larger and stronger, they can build bigger mosques that serve a wider community, offering many facilities such as teaching, helping people with various engagements, preaching, and support for new Muslims. (Hadi, The role of mosques as centers of social innovation in the development of urban Islamic communities, 2025) This highlights that some reverted women may have access to structured support, while others may have to navigate religious and social integration with minimal guidance. (Muhamad Azfar bin Suhaimi N. S., 2025)

Ultimately, mosques and religious institutions have the potential to support newly reverted Muslim women, especially in areas like marriage. However, this potential is not always fully realized. Limited resources, male-dominated leadership, cultural influences, and the lack of programs specifically for new Muslim women make it difficult for these institutions to fully meet their needs. Understanding both the ways mosques can help and the ways they may fall short is important, as it prepares the ground for examining differences in access to support between urban and rural communities.

2.2.2 Urban and Rural Disparities in Access

Accessibility of mosques is an important factor for newly reverted Muslim women. Not every place offers the same opportunities for Muslims to attend mosques, learn about Islam, or receive community support. In a small rural town, there may be only one mosque with limited educational classes, whereas in a large city, there are often multiple mosques and Islamic schools offering a wider range of services. (Herni, 2025) Muslim communities mostly live close together in cities, which makes it easier to organize religious activities and programs. They also often have more money and resources, allowing them to invest in better facilities. Likewise, a city mosque might have a library, classrooms, and a separate women's

section, while a small village mosque may only have a prayer hall. (Hadi, The role of mosques as centers of social innovation in the development of urban Islamic communities, 2025) Because cities have more people and resources, they can build larger mosques, Islamic centres, and schools. These places can host more students, have more teachers, and provide extra services like counselling or social events. An urban Islamic centre might run weekend Qur'ān classes, marriage workshops, and youth activities all in the same building. (Rahayu, 2025) Big mosques and centres usually have trained imams, scholars, or community leaders who know Islamic teachings well. They can guide people on religious practices, marriage advice, and joining the community in the right way. A reverted Muslim woman could meet a scholar at an urban mosque to learn about daily prayers, find a potential marriage partner, or understand Islamic etiquette. (Jabarkhail, 2020) Newly reverted Muslim women often do not have anyone to teach them Islam in a professional and step-by-step manner. This is where urban mosques play an important role, as they usually offer well-planned programs specifically designed for new Muslims, with trained teachers who help them learn and feel included in the community. City mosques also have more resources to create special groups for newly reverted Muslim women, where more experienced reverts can support them, share their own experiences, and help them feel connected and understood. (McGee, 2024) Big cities have many mosques built in different areas. These urban mosques often include community centres, and some even provide temporary accommodation for newly reverted Muslims until they are able to find a safe place to live. They also support the poor by providing food and offer different programs for various age groups. Some mosques provide Islamic education according to individuals' levels of knowledge, including Qur'an classes. Others design programs specifically for newly reverted Muslim women, teaching matters related to hijab and other aspects of daily Islamic practice. Such initiatives not only address their learning needs but also help them feel more connected to the Muslim community. (Karimullah, The role of mosques as centers for education and social engagement in Islamic communities, 2023)

On the other hand, rural areas often have very limited mosque facilities, and in some cases there may be only one mosque, which may primarily serve men. These mosques are usually small and compact, and some may not even have basic facilities such as loudspeakers, proper ablution areas, or sufficient funds to maintain electricity. Conditions also vary across different rural areas. Due to smaller populations, rural communities often face financial strain,

resulting in fewer facilities and limited resources to maintain even the basic needs of the mosque. As a result, meeting basic requirements can be considered a luxury in many rural settings. (Afriyanti, 2024) In rural areas, donations are often small because people generally have lower incomes. Due to limited donations, mosques are unable to hire trained teachers or female counsellors to provide support. Unlike city mosques, which can afford to employ full-time imams or teachers, rural mosques often rely on volunteers who are available only occasionally, sometimes once a week. The level of training or qualification of these volunteers may also be uncertain, as their teaching is offered voluntarily for the sake of Allāh. In most cases, the imam takes time to teach children how to recite the Qur'an or guides elders on how to perform prayers correctly. However, there are very limited opportunities for women, especially newly reverted Muslim women, to receive dedicated instruction or support in rural settings. (Khasanah, 2025) A newly reverted Muslim woman in a rural area may not find anyone who can teach her how to perform prayers step by step or confidently answer her questions. Women in rural areas are often not sufficiently educated to guide new reverts, and many are unable to visit the mosque due to the absence of dedicated spaces for women. In rare cases, female members of the imam's household may assist newly reverted Muslim women by meeting them in their homes with the imam's support; however, such arrangements are rare (Nurbawani, 2025) Mosques in rural areas are often used mainly for daily prayers or, at most, Friday sermons. In many cases, they do not have the financial capacity to arrange educational classes, women's circles, or learning sessions to support religious education. As a result, mosques are usually closed after each prayer and reopened shortly before the next one. This practice is common in many prayer spaces. Even in Madinah Munawwara, certain mosque areas are closed after prayers; however, there are other dedicated places available for learning. Therefore, the closure of mosque spaces after prayers is quite common and not unusual. (Ahmed F. , 2025) Newly reverted Muslim women, not being aware of these limitations in rural mosques, might feel isolated, ignored, and unsupported in learning basic religious practices such as ablution, hijab, and the essential dos and don'ts of the five pillars of Islam. (Khasanah, 2025) Rural mosques often lack dedicated spaces for women, and when lessons are occasionally arranged at private homes, opportunities remain limited. This restricts women's privacy when they need to attend the mosque, sometimes in areas shared with men. Although volunteers occasionally provide instruction, this is a significant disadvantage, and in many places, even such limited guidance is unavailable. (Nia, 2023) Islamic communities in rural areas are often less organized and

lack support groups that facilitate social networking. Women usually stay at home, which makes it harder for newly reverted Muslim women to connect with others or feel part of the Muslim community. A newly reverted Muslim woman may not know any other Muslim women to talk to or seek advice from. (Nur Tan Abdullah, 2024) With no events, gatherings, or social programmes, newly reverted Muslim women often find it difficult to meet suitable people for marriage. There are usually no Muslim women who can get to know them personally or help with matchmaking. As a result, many reverted Muslim women feel they have no option but to search for a spouse online. Unfortunately, online platforms can be unsafe and unreliable, with a high risk of scams. Some individuals may seek marriage for personal benefit and misuse Islamic knowledge to deceive and exploit vulnerable women. (Amina Akbar, 2025)

The differences between cities and rural areas are not only about mosques or money. These differences also affect how easy or difficult it is to learn Islam, depending on where someone lives. (Khasanah, 2025) Learning Islam in urban areas is relatively easy because a wide range of programs is available, from Islamic schools to Qur'an classes that are separately arranged for men and women. These programs are often taught by qualified Islamic scholars and include both advanced courses, such as Alimiyyah studies, and short introductory courses for new Muslims. After taking the shahada, reverted women can learn how to perform salah step by step and gradually progress to reciting the Qur'an with proper guidance. (Herni, 2025) With regular classes, revision sessions, and supportive learning environments, women not only develop interest and confidence but also benefit from gathering with other women. These settings often include discussions on the rights and responsibilities of husbands and wives, allowing reverted women to openly discuss marriage-related concerns. Such gatherings also create opportunities for women to connect and, through family and community networks, explore suitable marriage prospects. (Dariyanto, 2024)

2.2.3 Online vs Offline Support Systems

As discussed earlier, when newly reverted Muslim women are unable to access Islamic knowledge through their local community and begin to feel isolated, they often turn to social media and digital platforms to seek answers and learn. This occurs in both rural and urban areas. However, in urban settings, this shift is not due to a lack of facilities, but rather because online platforms offer flexible timings and quick access to information. Social media

channels take many forms, allowing newly reverted women to join WhatsApp groups, follow YouTube channels to practice Qur'an recitation, or use mobile applications designed to help them learn and improve their recitation skills. (Amina Akbar, 2025) On social media channels, platforms like Zoom allow people to attend live lectures by scholars or speakers. Participants can join live revision or correction classes, or lectures on topics ranging from Qur'an and Fiqh, to Islamic studies, often taught by scholars from other cities or countries. Learners can ask questions directly during the session or privately through the chat inbox. These platforms also provide opportunities to discuss issues related to marriage and even meet potential spouses. (Ach Syaikhu, 2024) However, there are significant risks: some speakers or 'ustads' are self-taught or have learned Islam mainly through the internet, without any institute, which can lead to incomplete or misleading knowledge. While online education offers many advantages, it also has notable limitations and potential drawbacks. (Silvi Ratnawulan, 2025) Although online education offers easy access to Islamic learning, it cannot fully replace face-to-face teaching. Offline classes provide personal guidance and direct correction that online platforms often lack. While a woman may learn how to perform salah or recite the Qur'an through videos or online lessons, having a teacher physically present to check and correct her practice remains essential. (Use of Social Media in Learning Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era, 2025) Correct information is available online in today's era, and it is possible to learn under qualified Islamic scholars if one is on the right platform. However, this is where the problem begins. Newly reverted Muslim women often do not know where to find authentic lessons for reverts, where classes are being held, or even how to use platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. Although there is plenty of information online explaining how to use these applications, internet access itself becomes another hurdle. In some cases, the connection is unstable or unreliable, which further limits their ability to benefit from online learning. (Rizky Giansyah Putra, 2024) Newly reverted Muslim women living in urban areas often have access to both offline and online learning opportunities. They benefit from this dual facility, and internet connections in cities are generally more stable. A city-based woman may attend a Qur'an class at a mosque and later participate in a WhatsApp study group in the evening. (Yasira Waqar, 2024) In rural areas, newly reverted Muslim women, especially those who learn and accept Islam online, rely heavily on digital tools for guidance and learning. They may follow YouTube lessons or paid online courses offered by people marketing their knowledge. Free resources are often provided by individuals who learned Islam primarily through the internet themselves. These resources can help with basic

Islamic knowledge or inspire women to understand Islam through the Qur'an and Hadith, sometimes even leading them to embrace Islam. However, when it comes to practical questions about daily life, the advice they receive can vary widely. Many online sources provide answers based on personal opinions rather than authentic scholarship. Newly reverted women, not knowing how to verify information or access reliable knowledge, may accept these answers as correct, which can lead to confusion or incomplete understanding. (Akiva Berger, 2023)

Online support serves as a valuable resource for newly reverted Muslim women, especially in rural areas where access to Islamic learning and counselling is limited. In these areas, even online learning can be challenging due to unstable internet connections and electricity issues. Urban areas, by contrast, offer more facilities, but online platforms still provide easy and flexible access to a variety of teachers from around the world. The main challenge in both urban and rural contexts is identifying credible sources of knowledge and finding accurate guidance. Online spaces, such as planned revert groups, not only allow women to learn correct religious practices but also provide opportunities to ask questions, understand marital rights, and connect with potential spouses. Overall, online support complements offline guidance, highlighting the importance of combining both modes to ensure newly reverted Muslim women receive reliable knowledge, practical guidance, and emotional support. Online and offline support each play an important role in the lives of newly reverted Muslim women, depending on their circumstances. However, external factors within the community and society significantly influence their learning and experiences, particularly in seeking marriage and finding a potential spouse. Social attitudes, cultural differences, and Islamophobia often create challenges that affect the opportunities available to them and how they understand these experiences. The following section explores the impact of these societal challenges on the marriage prospects of newly reverted Muslim women.

2.3 Impact of Islamophobia and Stigmatization on Marriage Prospects

Islamophobia and stigmatization also play a crucial role in the difficulties faced (Hafez, 2019, pp. 2-38) by reverted Muslim women when seeking a spouse. Several others suggest that the rise of Islamophobia in society leads to the social isolation of reverts, making it harder for them to find a welcoming environment within both the Muslim and broader communities. The Author of the book mentions that if she had encountered Muslims before exploring

Islam, she would not have embraced the faith. (Ozyurek, 2015, pp. 1-175) The negative societal attitudes towards Islam often create a barrier to marriage prospects, as reverted women may face rejection from both their families and the wider Muslim community. highlights the emotional toll of Islamophobia, noting that many reverted women struggle with acceptance from family and friends who may not understand their conversion. (Ozyurek, 2015, p. 55)This lack of acceptance can prevent them from forming healthy relationships and complicate their journey to find a suitable spouse.

2.3.1 Gendered Islamophobia and Visibility

Islamophobia is unfair treatment of Muslims, and gendered Islamophobia is directly targeted at Muslim women, as they suffer more from it because people can easily recognize them as Muslims, and society judges women more harshly than men. (Sediqe, 2023) Newly reverted Muslim women are easily identified by the way they cover themselves, not only through loose clothing styles but especially through the hijab, which highlights women and makes them feel exposed and at the edge of their identity. Whenever they go out, people may stare at them, call them names, or even bully them in public places. This makes them feel uncomfortable, confused, and hesitant to move freely, whether to visit public places or attend the mosque. As a result, it becomes difficult for them to practice their religion with ease. (The Experiences of Hijab and Non-Hijab-Wearing Muslim Women Students: Exploring Social Isolation and Discrimination in Delhi, India, 2025)

The newly reverted Muslim women may feel stressed, left out, lonely, and unconfident to even ask their questions or attend events where marriage proposals can be sought. Their confidence often becomes shaken due to the difficult treatment they receive from others, leaving them unsure of how people will perceive their questions about marriage and fearing that others may be judgmental. (Mohammed Fahim Uddin A. W., 2022)

Another factor that affects newly reverted Muslim women is their interaction with people, including both non-Muslims and Muslims. In some cases, Muslim community members may assume that newly reverted women might face difficulties in following Islamic teachings correctly, especially during the early stages of learning. Such assumptions can lead to judgment, which may affect their opportunities to receive marriage proposals or be considered as potential spouses. However, newly reverted Muslim women often show strong motivation to learn and practice their faith sincerely. Having consciously chosen Islam, they

tend to actively seek knowledge and strive to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. In contrast, some individuals born into Muslim families may, in certain contexts, take religious practices for granted due to familiarity, which can reduce the emphasis on continuous learning and reflection. As reminders benefit believers, regular guidance and engagement with Islamic knowledge remain essential for maintaining strong religious commitment. (Nasrin Khandoker, 2024)

2.3.2 Family Rejection and Social Alienation

Mostly, there is a lot of hostility towards other religions within families that strongly follow a particular faith. When a family member shifts to another religion, very few families are willing to give them space to explain their decision or try to understand and accept it. Those who do not offer such space often make strong efforts to bring the individual back to the religion the family already follows. Family support is very crucial in easing the mind and helping individuals make important decisions, especially regarding marriage. When newly reverted Muslim women start practicing Islam, the hostility they receive can sometimes become intense, including being ignored or emotionally mistreated within the family. Emotional and social pressure may grow to the point that they begin to feel isolated and have no one to confide in. Family support, therefore, remains a crucial factor in their well-being. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., 2025)

The presence of a Walī or guardian plays a significant role in the marriage process, as it provides emotional support, guidance, and a sense of security for women. (Sheer Abbas, 2024) Even when the guardian is non-Muslim, family involvement helps ensure that important aspects of marriage are carefully considered. Having a guardian allows for the verification of the groom and his family, facilitates communication between both sides, and ensures that marriage arrangements are carried out responsibly and ethically. It also signals to the groom's family that the woman is not alone and that she has support behind her, which can promote accountability and mutual respect. For women, having such support is essential, as it offers protection and reassurance throughout the marriage process. When newly reverted Muslim women do not receive support from their families, managing the marriage process independently becomes extremely difficult. Without guidance, protection, or emotional security, they are often left to navigate complex marital decisions alone. (Jarudin, 2025) Family abandonment frequently leads to social isolation, as relatives are less likely to become involved without the family's participation. In such situations, engaging with the groom's

family can be overwhelming, and the lack of familiarity and trust may intensify feelings of loneliness and uncertainty. This isolation can increase the risk of entering unsuitable marriages or emotionally harmful relationships, particularly when unregulated or informal matchmaking practices are involved. Families traditionally play a vital role in assessing compatibility, character, and long-term suitability, qualities that are essential for a stable and lasting marriage. Without this support, newly reverted women may struggle to evaluate potential spouses effectively. Consequently, the Muslim community is expected to play a guiding role by helping newly reverted Muslim women understand the essential requirements and ethical foundations of Islamic marriage. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., 2025)

Overall, the absence of family and social support following religious conversion has far-reaching consequences for marriage and well-being. This reality highlights the need for alternative, community-based support systems that can partially fulfill the protective and mediating roles traditionally carried out by families in the marriage process.

2.3.3 Internalized Islamophobia and Self-Worth

When newly reverted Muslim women are cornered and looked down upon by their own family, friends, and relatives, and when the new religion they shifted to makes them feel lower than those born into Muslim families, they start feeling low about themselves and feel that they do not deserve good, or think anything good about themselves. Feeling lonely can make them believe that they do not deserve to have better in life, so they compromise their own needs to achieve anything in life that they did not want for themselves, but accept proposals anyway, not valuing their own self-worth. In one of the studies done in Italy, it was shown that self-worth is damaged because of the psychological burden caused by close friends and family, as well as social pressure from being looked down upon. (Cristian Di Gesto, 2025) When they start feeling low about themselves, judging their own choices in life and thinking nothing good about themselves, they lose confidence in their own judgment and start following others blindly. Whoever shows a little care becomes influential, while their own identity and self-esteem are crushed. They become unsure whom to follow, facing self-conflicting decisions and constant doubts. This damages their personality and affects whomever they choose as a future spouse. (Mohammed Fahim Uddin A. W., 2022)

Therefore, newly reverted Muslim women often feel low about themselves, face social rejection, and experience isolation. These feelings can make it very difficult for them to

navigate the marriage process. Without help from family or a guardian (Walī), many turn to online Muslim marriage platforms to find a spouse. While these platforms can help connect people, they do not always meet the needs of reverted women or follow Islamic Sharia rules and regulations for marriage. They may not ensure that the match is fully compatible in Islam, verify character properly, or take into account the lack of community support. The next section examines these limitations in detail.

2.4 Limitations of Sharia-Compliant Marriage Apps

In recent years, marriage apps and online platforms designed to connect Muslims have become increasingly popular. However, studies indicate several limitations in the effectiveness of these platforms in facilitating Sharia-compliant marriages (Fikri, 2024, p. 248)for reverted Muslim women. These platforms often fail to meet the specific needs of reverted women, as they may not prioritize Islamic values or provide the level of scrutiny necessary to ensure compatibility. As a result, reverted Muslim women often find themselves navigating platforms that are not fully aligned with their religious and cultural needs. Additionally, many apps fail to address the unique challenges faced by reverts, such as lack of family support, integration into the Muslim community, and the societal stigmatization they experience. (Adra, 2012, p. 6)

2.4.1 Evolution of Muslim Matrimonial Platforms

Over the last decade, online marriage apps have rapidly increased to facilitate marriage for Muslims and reverted Muslim women around the globe. Although these platforms may successfully bring people together, they often use the same algorithm for all users, applying a generalized approach to family background and personal circumstances. (Adamu AbuBakar, 2020) Many aspects that families and communities traditionally observe and assess cannot be fully evaluated through these platforms when seeking a marriage partner. It is difficult to determine whether a person has the knowledge and patience to teach and support a new Muslim, whether both individuals follow the same school of thought, or whether a person is strict or lenient in practicing Islam. (Abdul Halim, 2025) As a result, there are significant limitations in relying solely on these platforms. However, in regions where Islamic communities or mosques are unavailable, such platforms can still serve as a valuable form of support. (Setiawati, 2025)

These platforms not only lack sufficient and accurate Islamic knowledge, but although they claim to be Sharia-based, they do not fully follow Islamic Sharia law. (Fikri, 2024) Many platforms provide the option of private meetings, which often leads to dating, and this is not permitted in Islam. They also allow private chatting and the exchange of phone numbers without the presence of a guardian or elder. While interaction can be regulated in Islam when elders or guardians are involved in communication or meetings, this supervision is usually absent on such platforms.

In the case of newly reverted Muslim women, the situation becomes more concerning. Without proper counselling or guidance from the Islamic community, a revert woman may approach these interactions based on her previous cultural norms and ethical framework. Even when she understands Islamic limits, most platforms do not provide any Walī or guardian for women who do not have one. As a result, there is no mediating authority to guide or protect her interests. This lack of supervision can lead to situations resembling dating, which Islam does not allow, increasing the risk of emotional harm and exploitation. (Abdul Halim, 2025)

2.4.2 Privacy, Safety, and Ethical Concerns

Sharing personal information is a major safety risk, especially for newly reverted Muslim women who already feel vulnerable within their communities or face bullying. In some parts of the world, converts to Islam even receive death threats, making security a critical concern. Online marriage platforms can also be misused as a way to target new Muslims. Additionally, some apps have third-party agreements that may result in the leakage of personal information. For newly reverted women without family support, such breaches can put them in serious danger. (Rubia Fatima, 2019)

While the leaking of personal information is one major issue, another concern is whether the person behind the screen is speaking the truth. Even apps with many added precautions cannot guarantee a person’s truthfulness. Some people pretend to be pious, but in reality, they are completely the opposite. Sometimes, to gain something, they speak and present things that are not true. Although these platforms label themselves as Muslim websites, making them sound halal and safe, this does not mean they actually are. Therefore, despite their Islamic branding, these platforms cannot be considered fully safe or reliable, particularly for newly reverted Muslim women. (Amber Sarfraz, 2025)

2.4.3 Cultural and Algorithmic Biases

People search for their future spouse based on region and culture, as many people look for a certain background or family support. The other person, being a newly reverted Muslim woman, might not even have a Muslim background or support. This is why she may not come into the algorithm as a person required or preferred by others. This gives fewer chances for new Muslims to appear or to have more variety of opportunities to choose from. (Rahul Garg, 2025) Their limited choices give them less satisfying or unmatched options, which they might agree to, as the website makes it difficult for them to be chosen because of certain limited access provided in the portal. If the person is from India and is still learning Islam, she may not appear in the choices of Arabs or South Asian Muslims who are born into Muslim families. (Musa Eren Celdir, 2023) At times, even language plays a role in making choices harder for them. Some cultures prefer certain languages, and if they do not have them, this excludes them as well. So, when less suitable candidates appear but are willing to support the newly reverted woman, she may accept the person simply because he is willing to support her. (Akinyemi, 2025)

2.5 Gaps in Support Systems for Reverted Muslim Women

Overall, there is a significant gap in the support systems available to reverted Muslim women, particularly when it comes to marriage. The combination of limited access to Sharia-compliant marriage resources, the lack of a robust community infrastructure, and the social challenges posed by Islamophobia and stigmatization leaves many women struggling to navigate the complexities of finding a suitable spouse. This literature review highlights the need for more comprehensive support systems that can offer guidance, mentorship, and a safe space for reverted Muslim women to explore marriage options within the framework of Islamic teachings. Addressing these gaps can help improve their marriage prospects and foster a more inclusive environment for reverted Muslims.

2.5.1 Absence of Revert-Specific Counselling Services

When newly reverted Muslim women need guidance, they often go to the Muslim community or Muslim counsellors who have mainly handled people from born-Muslim family backgrounds, especially in countries where Muslims are the majority. However, different countries come with different challenges. Non-Muslim countries have their own unique

issues, and many assumptions are built into counselling approaches that do not fit the realities of reverted women. In many cases, reverted Muslim women do not receive the correct counselling according to their specific problems and personal backgrounds. This becomes even more challenging when they are seeking marriage partners while they are still learning Islam and navigating new expectations. One of the most critical aspects is the role of a Walī and what to expect in this process. Only a professional counsellor who has previously worked with reverted Muslim women and has experience in their specific struggles can truly understand how to guide and support them properly. (Reza Mina Pahlewi, 2024)

2.5.2 Lack of Walī or Guardianship Structures

One of the most important figures in a family is the head of the household, often the father, brother, or uncle, a male figure who leads the family, protects its members, and acts in their best interest. The same principle applies to a Walī in Islam. Understanding the role of a Walī is crucial for newly reverted Muslim women. A Walī is not merely a male guardian; he is the person who assesses the suitability of a potential spouse, prioritizing the woman's best interests. His role is not to control her choices but to protect her dignity, uphold her rights according to Islamic teachings, and ensure her well-being when choosing a spouse. (Sheer Abbas, 2024) If a Walī assumes this position but is not given proper access or guidance, especially when the reverted Muslim woman is new to Islam and lacks knowledge about how the process works, many challenges can arise. She may not know who can serve as a Walī, what responsibilities a Walī has, which questions should be asked, or in which situations the Walī's presence is required. A Walī needs to be present alongside her throughout the marriage process. Without family support to navigate these matters, newly reverted Muslim women may face significant difficulties, increasing the risk of unsuitable matches or emotional harm. (Faizah, 2023)

2.5.3 Community and Policy-Level Shortcomings:

It is often seen that, although communities and mosques offer many courses to teach newly reverted Muslim women how to pray, recite the Quran, and engage in other aspects of religious learning, they rarely focus on marriage or provide guidance on finding a spouse. They do not have structured programs, community events, or policies to support new Muslims in this area. Even if newly reverted women attend mosques or community centres regularly, they often cannot find guidance on how to get married or support for their marital

needs and desires. Questions such as where to find a Walī, whether the local imam can act as their Walī, how to approach the imam, or how to involve the imam in meeting a prospective spouse, remain largely unaddressed. (Batool Al Toma, 2023)

2.5.4 Consequences of These Gaps

The consequences of these gaps not only affect newly reverted Muslim women but also affect the marriage afterward. When marriage is done mainly because of being alone, with no support from family, the Islamic community, mosques, or Islamic centres, and with very limited options, the outcome is often unhealthy. Being unable to fit into the Muslim community due to judgment, Islamophobia, and social pressure, newly reverted Muslim women feel alone while handling so much emotional stress. This often leads to anxiety, self-conflict, and a sense of insecurity. As a result, they may marry anyone who comes forward because they have lost their self-worth and confidence. This can lead to an unbalanced and mismatched life partner, resulting in a marriage that brings further difficulty and emotional distress for the newly reverted Muslim woman. (Taufik Taufik, 2025) Addressing these unaddressed issues is very important for the well-being of newly reverted Muslim women, especially when they are trying to find a suitable marriage partner. This study brings attention to these problems so that practical and realistic solutions can be suggested. By highlighting what is missing in current support systems, the research aims to help communities, mosques, and Islamic organisations better understand the needs of reverted Muslim women and work toward improving their support in the marriage process.

2.6 Comparative Studies: Reverted and Born Muslim Women

Studying the differentiation between the lives of born Muslim women and revert Muslim women is significantly important since it allows us to envision the certain problems that come from reverting rather than just gender itself. Reverted women often face more discrimination due to the lack of support from the family, acceptance in society, and marital integration, on top of already facing issues with gender-based beliefs. The reason why one would compare both groups is to give a spotlight to how community access and the environment can decide marital experiences in different communities. (Mishra, 2024)

2.6.1 Family Support and Walī Availability

When a woman has family support, the difference is as significant as it sounds when compared to a woman who does not have such support. A woman born into a Muslim family usually receives strong family assistance throughout the marriage process, while a woman who has newly reverted to Islam may have no family support at all. In a supportive Muslim family, the woman does not have to manage the process alone. The family helps with searching for a suitable spouse, assessing proposals, navigating the marriage process, and arranging the nikah. Matters such as paperwork, marriage arrangements, and wedding costs are often handled by the woman's guardian, who may be her father, brother, or uncle. Family members also provide guidance through marriage counselling, which may come from elders, relatives, or close family friends. Meeting the groom's family and planning these interactions are usually managed by the woman's family. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., 2025)

In contrast, a newly reverted Muslim woman often lacks this family support and may not know who will act as her Walī due to her limited familiarity with Islamic laws and marriage procedures. She may need to find an Islamic centre or mosque on her own, approach an imam, and request assistance with marriage arrangements. She may also need to ask whether the imam or Islamic institution can act as a Walī, help with planning costs, or support the nikah process. Arranging the marriage contract (nikah), managing documentation, and understanding Islamic legal requirements often fall entirely on her. Alongside this, she faces pressure to quickly learn Islamic laws related to marriage while also navigating the expectations of the groom, the groom's family, and cultural norms. (Perwitiningsih, 2025)

2.6.2 Cultural Familiarity and Religious Literacy

Women who are born into Muslim families grow up observing and learning from their surroundings from an early age. They are usually taught how to manage household responsibilities and understand what is expected by the groom's family, including cultural and religious expectations. In most cases, they do not need much guidance to understand marriage-related practices because these are familiar to them. Born Muslim women often marry within the same culture, and even if they marry outside their country or culture, the core religious principles usually remain the same. While some cultural practices may differ, the basic marriage procedures are already known to them. (Alyshea Cummins, 2025)

In contrast, newly reverted Muslim women face greater challenges. They must learn not only religious matters related to marriage but also understand their legal rights as wives, such as the right to receive mahr. In addition, they need to prepare themselves for the responsibilities and expectations that follow marriage. Navigating these religious, legal, and cultural aspects at the same time can be a significant challenge for newly reverted Muslim women. (Moch. Riza Fahmi, 2025)

2.6.3 Access to Marriage Networks and Community Trust

Muslim communities often have strong bonds that go beyond immediate family and relatives. These connections include friends, extended families, community gatherings, and social events such as weddings, Eid celebrations, and other communal activities. Through these settings, families can easily meet one another and search for suitable marriage partners. Elders and relatives often play a key role in introducing families, and trust is built because people know each other and share similar values and traditions. This system makes it easier to find a marriage partner according to personal preferences and family customs, which newly reverted Muslim women often lack. (Murshida. Khatun, 2025)

When a woman reverts to Islam, her community also changes, and she may need to search for a Muslim spouse without the support of family members or elders. This creates another challenge, as she may not know what to expect or how to approach marriage discussions. Even when community events are available, she may not know whom to approach, whom to trust, or how to connect with the families of potential marriage partners. As a result, newly reverted Muslim women not only lack access to established marriage networks and community trust but may also experience feelings of isolation and uncertainty about expectations from the groom's family. (Kayalı, 2025)

2.6.4 Social Acceptance and Marital Legitimacy

The same applies when it comes to being accepted by the Islamic community and the groom's family. There is often a lot of uncertainty for newly reverted Muslim women when they get married, as they may not know where to start or what to expect from both sides. Newly reverted Muslim women often worry about how to behave and how to gain acceptance, not only in the groom's life but also with his family, relatives, and within the wider community. In contrast, women born into Muslim families are already known through

their family and are generally accepted in society without any problems. (Zaifuddin Md Rasip R. H., 2025)

2.6.5 Emotional Vulnerability and Power Dynamics in Marriage

Muslim women who are born and raised in a Muslim community, with the support of their families, usually have guidance when they start their married life. They benefit from the experiences and advice shared by their family and relatives. Even if a problem occurs, it can often be discussed and resolved with the help of their family's support. This guidance helps the woman feel confident in her decisions and secure in navigating her marriage. In contrast, newly reverted Muslim women often feel emotionally vulnerable, confused, and unsure about which decisions are correct. They may not know which issues to address, which to accept, or where to seek advice. Because they are still learning and adjusting, they can feel emotionally sensitive, uncertain, and overwhelmed. (Jerry Wilson, 2025)

Muslim women born into Muslim families and newly reverted Muslim women both face their own challenges; however, the latter often experience greater confusion, sensitivity, and additional barriers in their lives. To better understand and address these struggles, this study is conducted to highlight these distinctions and identify targeted support mechanisms, which are further discussed in the next section on regional and cultural perspectives.

2.7 Regional and Cultural Perspectives

Every country has different dynamics, and different religious majorities affect society in different ways. With different majorities, people are influenced to live according to the dominant religious beliefs. If the majority is Muslim, even non-Muslims may follow certain ways of life that align with Muslim practices, and if the majority is non-Muslim, even Muslims will be affected by that way of life. Not only religious practices, but dressing styles, citizens' rights, and family dynamics are also affected. Understanding these global perspectives is very important in examining how they affect newly reverted Muslim women in different regions of the world and the challenges they face. (Abu-Hassin, 2025)

2.7.1 Muslim-Majority Societies

Every region has different cultural differences, even if there is a Muslim majority. To understand these differences and how they affect newly reverted Muslim women, this section highlights a few major regions. It shows that even if a woman is brought up in a Muslim-

majority country, she may face challenges when marrying someone from a different region. Social expectations vary widely across regions, and these differences can influence marriage experiences. (Rajnaara C. Akhtar, 2022)

The following sub-sections explain these dynamics in detail across three major Muslim-majority regions: MENA (Middle East & North Africa), South & Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These regions are expected to have similar cultural, social, and marital practices. (Waqar Husain a. U., 2022)

2.7.1.1 Middle East & North Africa (MENA) – Majority Muslim

As one of the fastest-growing major religions, a large number of Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. (Conrad Hackett, 2025) In this region is Saudi Arabia, part of the Middle East region, known as one of the strongest Muslim-dominant countries; most countries look up to Saudi Arabia as an example for the Muslim Ummah and for following Islam. (Mordechai Chaziza, 2025) However, Saudi citizens are restricted in their ability to marry non-Saudis. If they want to marry a non-Saudi, they need to obtain permission from their government. (Mansyuroh, 2019) This indicates that it is not always to be understood that, because Islam is a perfect religion, its implementation by societies may vary. Every region has its own rules and regulations according to what suits them. These regulations are often framed as protective measures, particularly for women, and therefore men are restricted to marrying Saudi women. (Cochrane, 2024)

When a newly reverted Muslim woman wants to marry and settle in Saudi Arabia, she faces significant limitations. Firstly, she should be a Saudi citizen, and secondly, she cannot buy her own house. She cannot travel with ease without a mahram, although some regulations have changed in recent years. Yet, she cannot marry a Saudi Arab, which leads to practical and emotional difficulties. If she wants to marry another nationality, another major barrier is language. Arabs mostly speak Arabic, and fewer people speak English or another language. Although mosques provide women's sections on a massive scale, having Islamic community centres everywhere is not possible. As it is a Muslim country, formal support structures specifically designed for non-Muslims or new reverts remain limited. (Alduraywish, 2023)

Considering another place, Bahrain, where many expatriates come and accept Islam on a massive scale, they generally do not face major problems in marrying newly reverted Muslim

women. However, language remains a barrier, and family and community judgment may still be present. (Cawtar, 2020)

2.7.1.2 South & Southeast Asia – Majority Muslim

In Indonesia, Muslims often do not register their marriages, and for a revert who lacks awareness, the importance of registering their nikah or even registering their acceptance of Islam may not be understood. When a non-Muslim accepts Islam, it is important to take the shahada in a masjid and also to obtain a certificate confirming the acceptance of Islam. Although Islamically, taking the shahada even at home is valid, having religious documentation plays an important administrative role. Lack of knowledge about where to obtain these documents and not prioritizing this process can lead to future problems. This may affect citizenship and inheritance matters for children and the wife as a newly reverted Muslim. (Della Agnesia Purba, 2025)

2.7.1.3 Sub-Saharan Africa – Majority Muslim (West & East Africa)

In West and East Africa, countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Senegal, and northern Nigeria represent some of the most significant Muslim-majority areas in Sub-Saharan Africa. In these countries, marriages are usually guided by Islamic rules, local community practices, and government regulations. Similar to what has been discussed earlier in relation to MENA countries, nationality becomes a serious issue when a marriage takes place outside the local community. Women are often given fewer chances to defend their rights when problems arise, especially when marriage matters are handled by community elders rather than government authorities. (Cooper, 2024)

The situation becomes even more difficult for women who accept Islam and marry into a Muslim community as reverts. Marriage disputes in these regions are often managed by elders instead of official government bodies, and in such cases, marriage registration is not treated as important. As a result, when problems later arise, government institutions are often unable to intervene due to the lack of legal documentation. In many Sub-Saharan African countries, women are often raised in communities where men are expected to have authority over them. For most women, this is already challenging, but for a newly reverted Muslim woman, the difficulties can be much greater. In some marriages, husbands or family members take advantage of her limited knowledge of Islam to justify unfair treatment, providing her with selective or incorrect information that benefits them rather than reflecting the true

teachings of the religion. This misuse of religion can leave reverted women feeling confused, unsupported, and vulnerable within their own household. Countries such as Sudan and others in the region demonstrate how cultural norms combined with misinterpretation of Islam can increase the social and legal challenges for women entering marriage. (Aref Ahmed (Md Mizanur Rahman, 2025) This study highlights that without proper marriage registration and legal guidance, newly reverted Muslim women in Sub-Saharan African countries face increased legal and social difficulties.

2.7.2 Minority Muslim Contexts (Non-Muslim Majority Countries)

When we turn to the Indian context, newly reverted Muslim women often face severe social hostility upon accepting Islam. Their conversion frequently becomes highly visible, exposing them to harassment, intimidation, and, in some cases, death threats from segments of the surrounding community. Marriage to a reverted Muslim woman is also often discouraged within born-Muslim families, not due to religious objections, but because of the social backlash and security risks involved. (Andrea Malji, 2021) In certain cases, Muslim men who marry reverts face threats and social exclusion, making such marriages particularly challenging within the Indian context.

As a result of these pressures, many newly reverted Muslims in India either choose not to publicly disclose their conversion or attempt to migrate to other countries in search of safety and religious freedom. (Patil, 2021)However, concealing one's religious identity creates further complications, particularly in the context of marriage. Since religious affiliation is legally significant in India, women who have not formally registered their conversion may face difficulties in contracting a Muslim marriage under the law. In many cases, the shahada must be officially documented through legal procedures and court involvement, often requiring lawyers, which makes the process lengthy, complex, and emotionally taxing. (Gupta, 2023)

In non-Muslim majority countries, the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women are not limited to one specific national context. Similar patterns can be observed across several minority Muslim settings, where conversion to Islam often leads to social tension, family resistance, and reduced marriage opportunities. Reverted women may struggle to gain acceptance both from their families of origin and from Muslim communities, which can leave them feeling isolated at a time when social support is especially important for marriage and

settlement. Studies from different regions show that these pressures can affect personal decisions related to marriage, identity, and long-term stability. (Batool, 2022) In some contexts, fear of social backlash or rejection encourages reverted Muslims to conceal their religious identity, delay marriage, or seek relocation to environments where they feel safer and more accepted. These experiences indicate that the difficulties faced by reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage are not unique to India, but reflect a wider reality experienced by Muslim minorities in various parts of the world. (Nowar, 2025)

Overall, this comparison highlights a recurring pattern in minority Muslim contexts, where social attitudes, legal frameworks, and community responses intersect to create barriers for reverted women who wish to marry within their faith. Recognizing these shared challenges is essential for developing appropriate support mechanisms and community-based solutions that can address the specific needs of reverted Muslim women across different societies.

2.7.3 Transitional or Mixed Cultural Contexts

Transitional or mixed cultural contexts arise when individuals navigate between traditional Islamic norms and the influences of modern or globalised cultures. In the context of marriage, these dynamics can significantly affect partner selection, family involvement, and expectations of marital roles. Newly reverted Muslim women, particularly those living in diaspora or minority Muslim communities, often face the challenge of balancing adherence to Islamic principles with the norms of the surrounding society. Exposure to modern education, employment opportunities, and social freedoms can empower women to make independent choices but may also create tension with traditional expectations regarding gender roles, family consultation, and marriage procedures. Cultural alignment between spouses is therefore critical, as mismatched expectations can increase the risk of conflict or dissatisfaction. Recognizing these transitional contexts is essential for understanding why faith-based guidance, mentorship, and community support are particularly important for reverted women navigating the marriage process in such environments. (Kayalı, 2025)

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Social Support Theory and the Cultural Adaptation Theory. Social Support Theory emphasizes the protective role of family, community, and mentors in reducing emotional stress, providing guidance, and facilitating safer and more informed

marital decisions. This theoretical lens helps explain how the absence of social support can increase vulnerability for reverted women during the marriage process. Cultural Adaptation Theory complements this by examining how individuals adjust to new cultural norms while maintaining their religious identity. It is particularly relevant for reverted women who must reconcile Islamic marital principles with external societal pressures, whether related to dating norms, gender expectations, or intergenerational family influences. By integrating these two theories, the study is able to explore the interaction between social, cultural, and religious factors that influence marriage outcomes for reverted Muslim women. (Farah Taha Goheer, 2025)

2.9 Conceptual Framework and Identified Gaps

The conceptual framework of this study integrates faith-based guidance, social support, cultural adaptation, and institutional assistance as key determinants influencing successful marital outcomes for reverted women. Central to this framework is the role of Islamic guidance and mentorship, which ensures adherence to religious principles and ethical conduct during the marriage process. (Ummah, 2025) Social support from family, community, and mentors serves as a protective factor against emotional stress, exploitation, and misjudgement, as supported by contemporary research on social support and minority integration (Yaser Snoubar, 2022) Cultural adaptation provides insight into how reverted women navigate tensions between traditional expectations and contemporary societal norms, particularly in mixed cultural and religious environments. (Farah Taha Goheer, 2025) Despite the importance of these factors, several gaps remain. There is a lack of revert-focused guidance programs, limited research addressing the influence of mixed cultural environments, and insufficient online or institutional resources aligned with Sharia-compliant marriage practices. Addressing these gaps is essential to understanding the complex challenges reverted women face and forms the foundation for the research design, data collection, and analysis in this study. (Ghiffari, 2025)

2.10 Chapter Summary

In summary, the literature reviewed highlights that newly reverted Muslim women face unique challenges in seeking marriage due to a combination of social, cultural, and religious

factors. Experiences of Islamophobia, gendered discrimination, and societal stigmatization often lead to social isolation and emotional stress, making it harder for them to access marriage networks or gain acceptance from both the Muslim community and their families. Family rejection and the absence of a Walī or guardian leave many reverted women without guidance, protection, or emotional support, which complicates their ability to make informed and confident marital decisions. (Bonne Martinot, 2020)

Online Muslim marriage platforms, while increasingly popular, are often insufficient for reverted women, as they may lack full adherence to Sharia principles, do not provide guardianship or supervision, and carry privacy and safety risks. Cultural and algorithmic biases on these platforms can further reduce visibility and access to suitable matches, forcing some women to compromise on their needs or accept unsuitable proposals. Comparisons with born-Muslim women show that family support, cultural familiarity, and community trust significantly ease the marriage process, highlighting the additional vulnerabilities faced by reverted women. (Nisa, 2021)

Regional and cultural contexts further shape these experiences. Women in Muslim-majority, minority-Muslim, and transitional cultural settings encounter different legal, social, and community-related challenges that influence their ability to find a spouse. These variations emphasize the need for context-specific guidance, mentorship, and structured support systems that account for both religious and societal factors. (Khalid, 2025)

Despite some available resources, clear gaps remain in counselling services, access to knowledgeable Walī or guardians, structured community programs, and safe, faith-aligned online platforms for reverted women. This literature review underscores the need for targeted research to explore these challenges in depth, identify effective support mechanisms, and propose practical, Sharia-compliant solutions to improve marriage prospects and well-being for newly reverted Muslim women. (Abdul Ghafar Don, 2025)

Chapter 3

Methodologies

This chapter outlines the research design and methodological approach adopted in this study to investigate the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. It explains the overall research strategy, data collection methods, sampling procedures, research instruments, and techniques used for data analysis. Ethical considerations and measures taken to ensure reliability and validity are also discussed. This chapter provides the methodological foundation that guided the implementation of the study and supports the interpretation of the findings presented in subsequent chapters.

3.1 Research Strategy

This study adopted a survey-based research design approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. By combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research provides a broader perspective on the issue, combining statistical data with in-depth personal experiences.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The primary resource for data collection method for this study was a survey designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information from newly reverted Muslim women regarding their experiences in seeking marriage. Surveys were selected as they allowed the researcher to capture a broad understanding of challenges, social and cultural barriers, and access to Islamic resources, while also providing participants an opportunity to share personal experiences.

Survey Design:

- The survey contained 8 questions, combining closed-ended and open-ended formats.
- Demographic questions included age, ethnicity, country of residence, and length of time since conversion.
- Core questions focused on social and cultural challenges, access to Islamic resources (e.g., mosques, community centres), experiences with online marriage platforms, and coping mechanisms when seeking a spouse.
- Open-ended questions allowed participants to provide reflections, personal experiences, and suggestions for improving support systems for reverted women.

3.3 Population

The study focused on newly reverted Muslim women. A total of 264 participants were selected through an online survey. The participants were engaged in online support groups, marriage apps, or attended Islamic community centres and masjids. The aim was to gather a diverse range of perspectives from various backgrounds and experiences.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposive Sampling: Participants were selected based on their status as newly reverted Muslim women and their involvement in relevant support systems (e.g., community centres, marriage networks, social media groups).

Referral Sampling: Initial participants were asked to refer other women who were willing to participate, helping to increase the sample size and ensuring that a variety of experiences are captured.

3.5 Ethical Considerations:

Informed Consent: All participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the study. Written consent was obtained from each participant before their involvement.

Confidentiality: Participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential. Data were stored securely, and only anonymized data was used for analysis.

Voluntary Participation: Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey were analysed using a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach.

Quantitative data from closed-ended questions was analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, to identify patterns in participants' responses.

Qualitative data from open-ended questions was analysed using thematic analysis. Responses were reviewed carefully, and recurring themes were identified and grouped according to the research objectives. This helped in understanding the lived experiences, emotional challenges, and social barriers faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Ensuring validity and reliability was essential to maintain the credibility and consistency of the study.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure. In this study:

Content validity was ensured by developing the survey based on existing literature and the research objectives related to marriage challenges among reverted Muslim women.

Face validity was considered by reviewing the clarity and relevance of the questions before distribution.

Construct validity was supported by designing questions that measured key concepts such as social barriers, emotional challenges, and access to Islamic support.

Data triangulation was achieved through the combination of quantitative and qualitative responses within the survey.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the research findings. It was ensured through the following:

Standardized survey questions were used for all participants.

A pilot review of these survey questions was conducted prior to data collection.

Internal consistency was maintained by ensuring clarity and uniformity in question structure.

All responses were collected and analysed using the same procedures to maintain consistency.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

3.8.1 Limited Generalizability

Due to the use of purposive and referral sampling, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all newly reverted Muslim women globally. However, the study provides valuable insights into common patterns and experiences.

3.8.2 Sampling Bias

Since participants were mainly recruited through online networks and support groups, women without access to such platforms may not have been represented.

3.8.3 Self-reporting Bias

The data were based on self-reported responses, which were influenced by personal perception or emotional interpretation.

3.8.4 Time Constraints

The study was conducted within a limited timeframe, which restricted the possibility of expanding the sample size further.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological framework of the study, including the research design, data collection method, sampling strategy, ethical considerations, and data analysis techniques. A survey-based approach was used to explore the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The methodology ensured validity, reliability, and ethical integrity throughout the research process. Despite certain limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into the lived experiences of reverted Muslim women. The next chapter will present and analyse the findings of the collected data.

4. Originality and Significance

This study provides critical insights into the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in their search for a spouse. It fills an important gap in the existing literature by focusing on this underexplored area, addressing both the social and religious aspects of marriage for Muslim reverts. The findings will have significant practical value for community leaders, Islamic organizations, and policymakers, offering solutions for creating more inclusive, supportive environments for Muslim female reverts seeking marriage. Theoretical contributions will include a deeper understanding of the intersection of faith, gender, and social integration in the context of marriage. This research proposal outlined the planned investigation into the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in finding a suitable marriage partner while adhering to Islamic principles. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the study aimed to provide actionable recommendations for supporting this demographic and creating an environment conducive to their spiritual and social well-being.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the data collected from newly reverted Muslim women regarding the challenges they face when seeking marriage and the impacts of these challenges. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Quantitative data are presented using frequencies, percentages, and figures, while qualitative responses are used to support and explain the statistical findings.

The chapter is organized into several sections. Section 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section 4.2 provides an overview of the respondents'

general background and reversion-related information. Section 4.3 discusses the major challenges faced by reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. Section 4.4 examines the impacts of these challenges, while Sections 4.5 and 4.6 present the suggested solutions and open-ended recommendations provided by the respondents.

Starting with the demographic background of the respondents who participated in the study. The purpose is to provide an overview of the respondents' age, education level, and marital status. The purpose of presenting these characteristics is to understand how personal and social factors may influence the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage. Different age groups may experience different types of difficulties, while occupational status may affect financial stability, independence, and access to social networks. Educational background may also shape awareness, expectations, and decision-making in the marriage process.

In addition, marital status provides important insight into whether participants are seeking marriage for the first time or have previous marital experiences, which may influence their perspectives and challenges. By examining these demographic characteristics, the study provides a clearer understanding of how individual circumstances shape the marriage experiences of reverted Muslim women.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section presents background information related to the respondents' reversion to Islam and their general situation after embracing Islam. This includes aspects such as the length of time since reversion, family acceptance, level of Islamic knowledge, and access to community support. This information is important because it helps explain how personal circumstances may influence the challenges faced in seeking marriage.

The findings indicate that many respondents experienced limited family support and varying levels of community acceptance after reversion. Some respondents had access to Islamic guidance and community networks, while others reported feeling isolated or unsupported. These background factors play a significant role in shaping the marriage experiences of

reverted Muslim women and provide important context for the challenges and impacts discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

As shown in Figure 4.1, the age distribution of the respondents shows that the largest group belonged to the age category of 41 years and above, with 91 respondents (33%). This was followed by respondents aged 18–25 years, with 58 respondents (21%). The age group 26–30 years included 45 respondents (17%), while those aged 31–35 years accounted for 40 respondents (15%). Respondents aged 36–40 years represented 37 respondents (14%). This distribution shows that a significant proportion of the respondents were mature adults, indicating that many reverted women continue to face marriage-related challenges even at later stages of life.

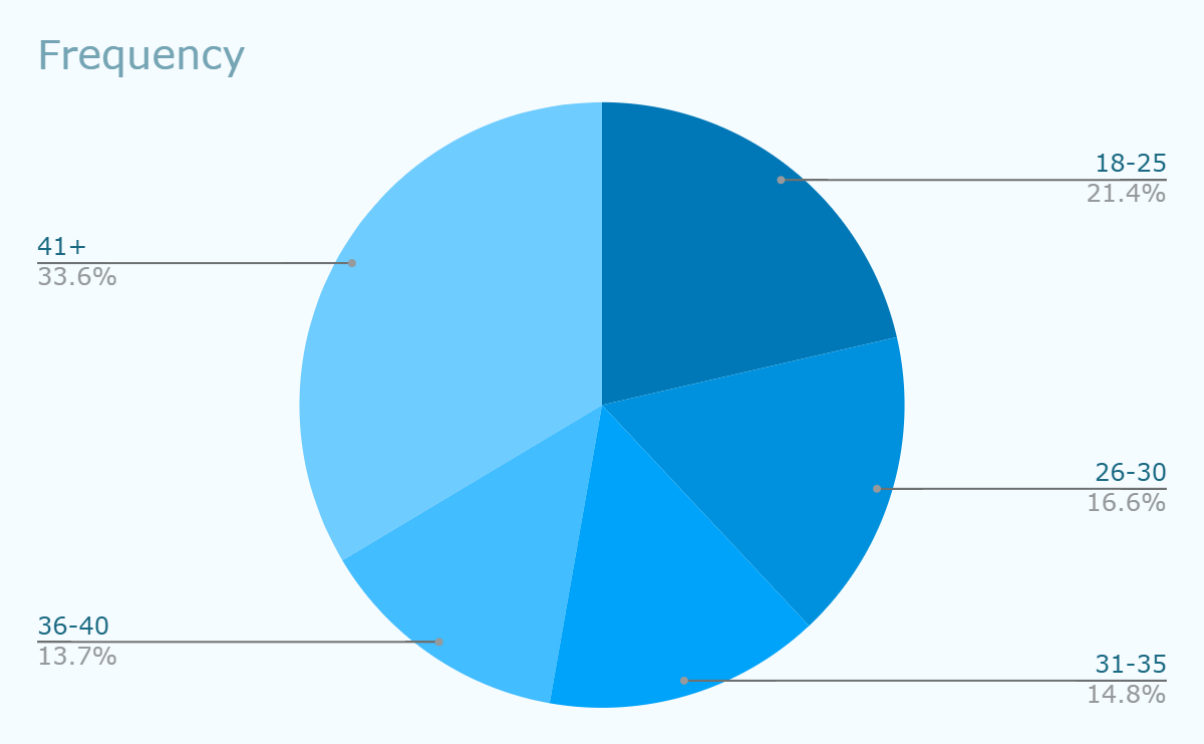


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents (n = 266)

4.2.2 Marital Status

The marital status of the respondents is presented in Figure 4.2. The majority of respondents were married, with 164 out of 264 respondents (62.1%) reporting that they were currently married. This indicates that a large proportion of reverted Muslim women in the study had already entered into marriage after reversion.

Single respondents accounted for 71 participants (26.9%), representing more than one quarter of the sample. Divorced respondents included 20 participants (11.4%), while widowed respondents represented 10 participants (3.8%).

This distribution shows that the respondents were at different stages of marital life, including those seeking marriage for the first time as well as those with previous marital experiences. These differences are important for understanding the variety of challenges and perspectives presented in the study.

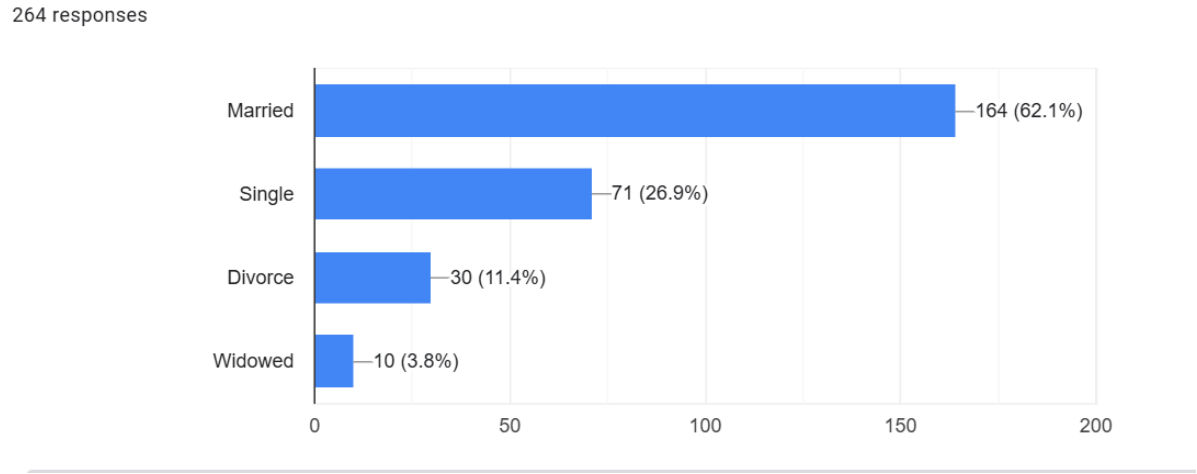


Figure 4.2: Marital Status of Respondents (n = 264)

4.2.3 Educational Qualification

The educational levels of the respondents are presented in Figure 4.3. The majority of respondents were graduates, with 89 respondents (32.8%). This was followed by respondents holding a master's degree, with 46 respondents (17.0%). Those with higher secondary education accounted for 43 respondents (15.9%), while respondents with other forms of education represented 27 respondents (10.0%).

A smaller number of respondents had completed secondary education, with 12 respondents (4.4%), and only 5 respondents (1.8%) held a doctoral degree. No respondent reported having a postgraduate qualification in the specified category.

Overall, the findings indicate that most respondents had moderate to high levels of education, suggesting that educational background may influence awareness, expectations, and experiences related to marriage.

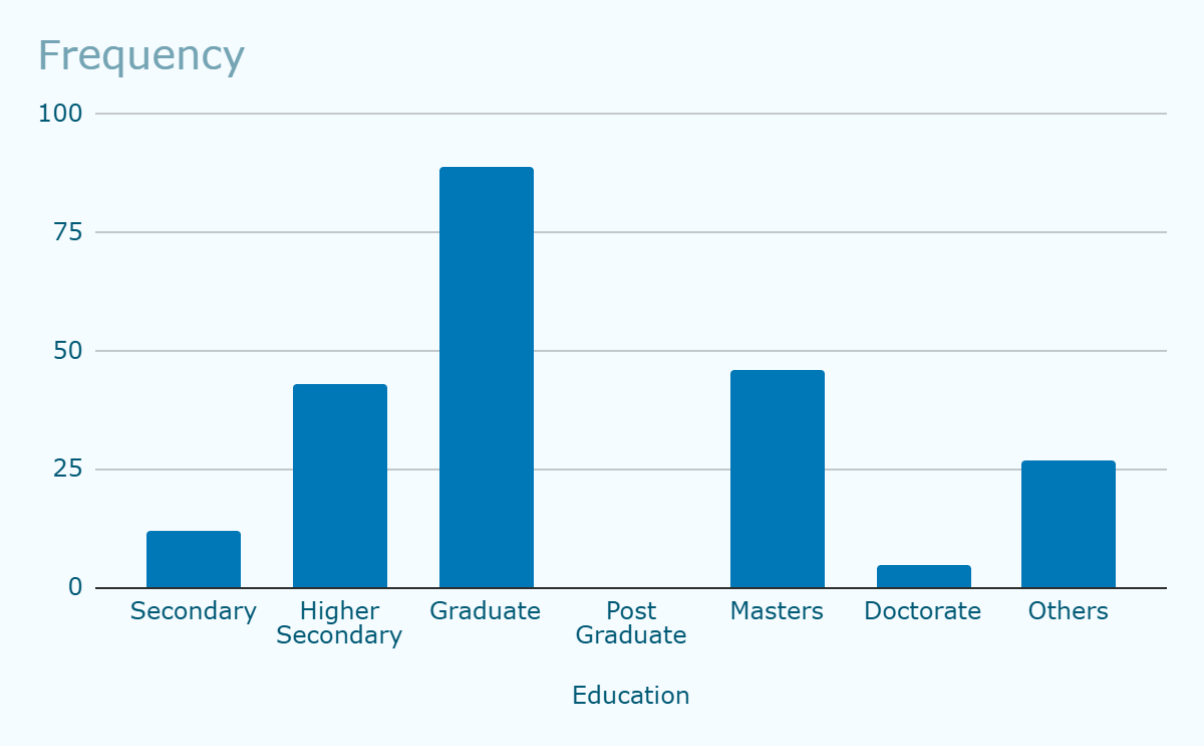


Figure 4.3: Educational Level of Respondents (n = 269)

4.2.4 Occupation

The occupational background of the 260 respondents is shown in Figure 4.4. from Educators formed the largest group, with 48 respondents (17.7%), followed by homemakers with 44 respondents (16.2%). Respondents working in the private sector accounted for 42 participants (15.5%), while students represented 28 respondents (10.3%). Healthcare workers constituted 27 respondents (10.0%), and housewives accounted for 21 respondents (7.7%).

Smaller proportions were observed among those working in the public sector with 10 respondents (3.7%), self-employed respondents with 5 respondents (1.8%), and those categorized as others with 5 respondents (1.8%). Only one respondent (0.4%) reported working in the military sector.

This indicates that the respondents came from diverse professional backgrounds, reflecting a wide range of social and economic circumstances.

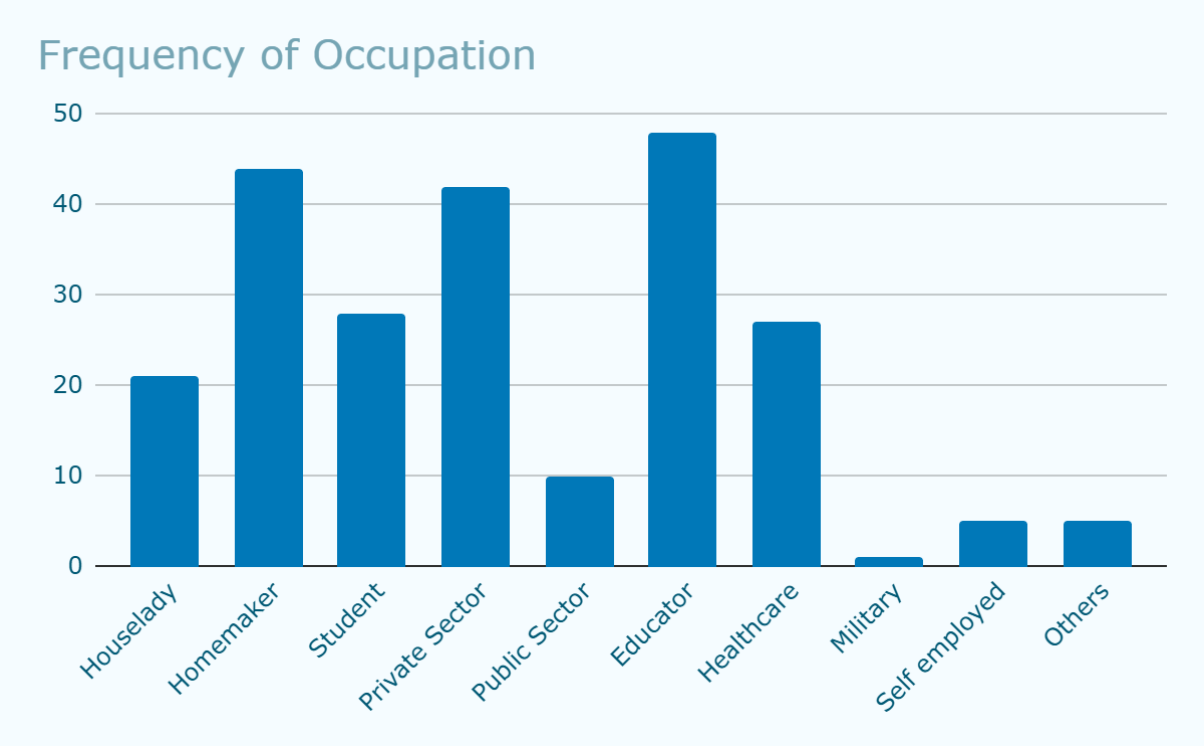


Figure 4.4: Occupational Background of Respondents (n = 260)

4.3 Challenges Faced by Newly Reverted Muslim Women in Seeking Marriage

This section presents the main challenges experienced by reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage. The challenges are grouped based on participants' responses, highlighting recurring themes. Quantitative data from the survey is complemented with qualitative insights from open-ended responses.

A small number of respondents also highlighted additional practical challenges related to financial vulnerability and the lack of credible online marriage support platforms. Although these concerns were not widely reported, they reflect isolated but important realities faced by some revert women. One respondent mentioned financial instability following conversion, while another referred to the absence of trustworthy online matrimonial services. These issues, though not dominant across the dataset, indicate potential structural gaps that may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities for revert women seeking marriage.

4.3.1 Lack of Islamic Guidance and Family Support

Quantitative Evidence:

As shown in Figure 4.5, a total of 72 out of 271 respondents (26.6%) reported that lack of Islamic guidance and family support was a significant challenge in seeking marriage. This highlights that over a quarter of reverted Muslim women experience difficulties due to the absence of family advocacy or Islamic mentoring.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant Voices):

Many participants described emotional struggles and isolation due to unsupportive families. For example, Participant 96 stated:

“Getting a genuine practicing Muslim. Facing opposition from family members, disapproving the marriage and potential suitor.”

Another participant no.88 stated:

“Lack of parents or an elder relatives support, which makes it extremely difficult to find a good reputed knowledgeable family and then even if found, they are hesitant”.

Additional qualitative insights include:

Non-Muslim families often misunderstand Islamic beliefs, leading to fear or resistance toward Muslim spouses. Families sometimes refuse to participate in Islamic marriage arrangements, leaving women without support.

Interpretation:

The combination of numbers and participant voices shows that lack of guidance and family support is both common (quantitative) and emotionally impactful (qualitative). It contributes to delayed marriage prospects, feelings of insecurity, and loneliness, highlighting the need for community-based support and alternative guardianship options.

Visual Summary (Chart):

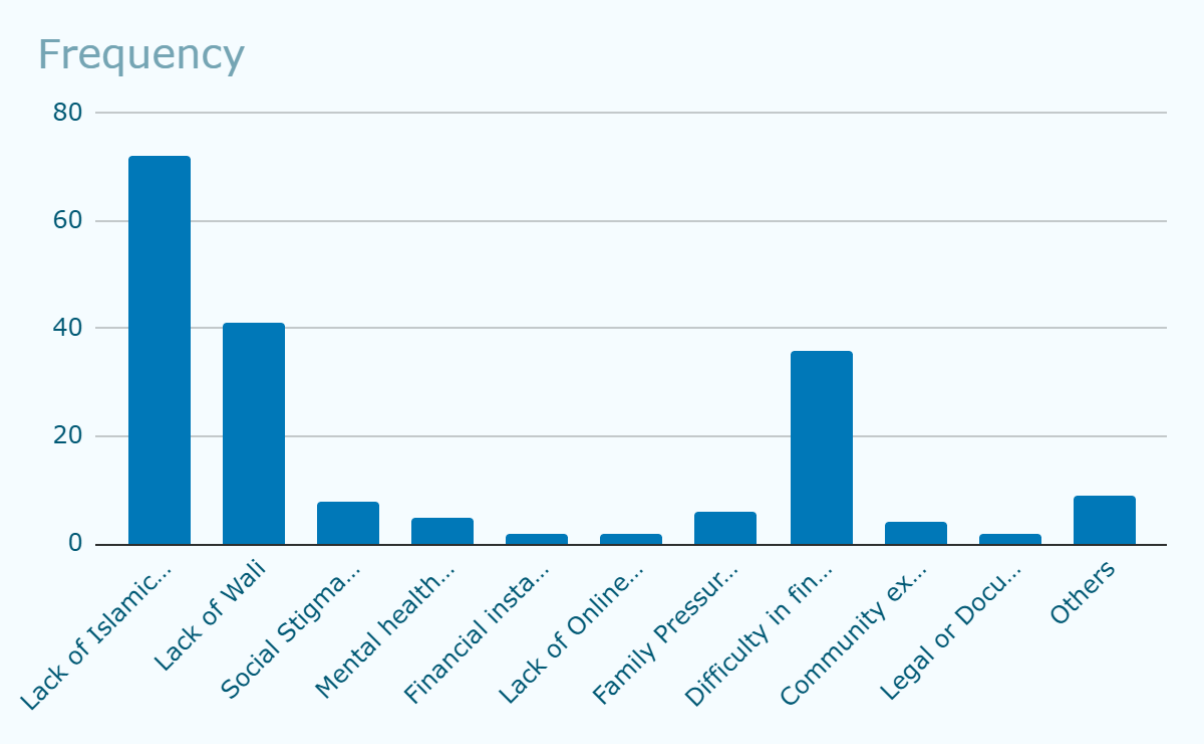


Figure 4.5: Distribution of Reported Challenges in Seeking Marriage Among Reverted Muslim Women (N = 271)

4.3.2 Lack of Trust in Walī and Religious Authorities

Quantitative Evidence:

This indicates, in Figure 4.5, that a total of 41 out of 271 respondents (15.1%) reported that the absence of a Walī or lack of trust in a guardian/religious authority was a significant challenge when seeking marriage.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant Voices):

Participant no.95 explained that the absence of a trusted Walī made them feel vulnerable and unsure about the intentions of potential spouses:

“The no.1 issue is having a reliable Walī. There is often no education on how one uses a Walī during "the search" and often a lack of availability from righteous brothers to help.”

Participant no.253: “They don’t have anyone to look for a husband for them or check if the person is good, there might not be many practicing brothers in her area; they might have

wrong ideas about marriage and no one to give them advice; family don't support their decision and are not happy with her marriage."

Participant no.267: "Absence of guardians at the time of marriage. No family support. Trust and validation issues. The absence of a Walī or male guardian means reverted women navigate marriage alone, increasing vulnerability to unsuitable proposals or exploitation."

Interpretation:
These findings show that the absence of a trusted Walī or guardian leaves reverted Muslim women feeling vulnerable, unsupported, and unsure about the intentions of potential spouses. Participants highlighted that many women lack guidance on how to use a Walī during the marriage search, do not have access to knowledgeable and righteous brothers in their area, and often face families who do not support or approve their marriage decisions. Without this critical support, reverted women are left to navigate the marriage process alone, which increases the risk of unsuitable proposals, exploitation, and emotional stress.

The findings suggest a strong need for community-based Walī programs, mentorship from knowledgeable Muslims, and alternative support structures to provide guidance, protect women from potential harm, and help them make informed and safe decisions in their search for a spouse.

4.3.3 Difficulty Finding a Suitable Partner

Quantitative Evidence:

A total of 36 out of 271 respondents (13.3%) reported difficulty finding a suitable partner as a significant challenge, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no.99):

"Its hard-to-find practicing Muslim. Foreign man often has bad plan, just to get EU Viza and after leave, and their traditional way is to marry locals."

Participants highlighted that some men approach marriage with selfish intentions, seeking marriage primarily to obtain immigration benefits such as residency or visas, and then abandon the woman after achieving their personal goals. This made identifying sincere and trustworthy partners highly stressful and difficult for reverted women.

Interpretation:
These findings show that difficulty in finding a suitable partner is not only about the lack of options, but also about fear, uncertainty, and lack of protection. Although a notable number of respondents reported this challenge, the qualitative response clearly reflects deeper concerns about intentions and sincerity. The participant's statement shows that reverted women often worry about men who may approach marriage for personal benefit, such as immigration purposes, rather than for genuine companionship and commitment.

Without family support or a trusted Walī, many reverted women are left to judge a man's character and intentions on their own. This makes the process emotionally stressful and increases the fear of making a serious mistake. The findings suggest that reverted women need safer community-based support systems and trustworthy matchmaking services that can help verify proposals and protect them from exploitation, while guiding them toward religiously compatible partners.

4.3.4 Social Stigma, Islamophobia, and Discrimination

Quantitative Evidence:

Figure 4.5 highlights that eight respondents (8.0%) reported facing social stigma or family pressure as a barrier to seeking marriage.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant No. 106):

"Not really accepted in society".

Another Participant no. 135:
"Treated as outsiders, always under suspicion, continuously judged about the past"

Another participant no.125:
"Possible oppression and accusations of backwardness from non-believing relatives and other society members"

Some participants described experiencing gossip, judgment, or criticism from extended family and community, which affected confidence and decision-making.

Interpretation:
These findings show that social stigma, Islamophobia, and discrimination create deep emotional and social barriers for reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage. Although a

smaller proportion of respondents reported this challenge, the qualitative responses clearly reveal strong feelings of rejection, suspicion, and judgment. The participants' statements show that many reverted women feel unaccepted in society, treated as outsiders, and constantly reminded of their past, which affects their dignity and self-confidence.

Being viewed with suspicion or accused of backwardness by family members and society places reverted women in a painful position where they must defend both their faith and their personal choices. This negative social environment not only discourages them from seeking marriage openly but also increases feelings of isolation and emotional stress. The findings highlight the need for greater community awareness, acceptance, and support in order to protect reverted women from discrimination and to create a safer and more respectful environment for their marriage journey.

4.3.5 Exploitation and Abuse in Marriage

Quantitative Evidence:

Five respondents (1.8%) reported mental health stress as a significant challenge, as indicated in Figure 4.5.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no.193):

"I was a Hindu by birth. I reverted to Islam in year 2002, my family boycotted me and they tried to kill me. So, I flew to Dubai and took shelter in a women organization called 'HOPE'"

Mental health stress often appeared linked to loneliness, lack of confidence, and fear of life can pressure them to marry as soon as possible and mistakes in the marriage process.

Interpretation:

These findings show that exploitation, abuse, and severe emotional trauma are real risks faced by some reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage. Although reported by a smaller number of respondents, the qualitative response reveals an extremely serious and life-threatening experience. The participant's account shows how rejection by family, violence, and fear for personal safety can force reverted women into isolation and displacement, leaving them without protection, stability, or emotional support.

Such experiences create deep psychological distress, fear, and insecurity, which may pressure reverted women to seek marriage quickly in search of safety, belonging, or protection.

Without family support or trusted guidance, this vulnerability increases the risk of entering unsafe or unsuitable marriages. The findings highlight the urgent need for protective community structures, safe shelters, emotional counselling, and trustworthy guidance to support reverted women who face violence, abandonment, and trauma during their transition and marriage journey.

4.3.6 Family Pressure and Religious Conflict, and Custody Issues

Quantitative Evidence:

Figure 4.5 shows that two respondents (0.7%) reported financial instability as a challenge in seeking marriage. And one respondent is facing custody issues with her children.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no. 91):

“Mostly it's financial, unavailability of Muslim men able to provide food and shelter.”
And said, “Most reverts still have the materialistic view, not trying to build from zero with husband. They want everything prepared before marriage (shelter, furniture, etc.), which takes a long time to prepare, and time is a valuable thing for women.”

Participant no.127 said, How can we go out legally from a past Christian marriage if the husband does not want to be Muslim or has sexually abused his own children, and for a long time there has been no communication? How can I go out legally about my past marriage if I want to marry a Muslim man for my future life? What legal action do I need to take?”

Interpretation:

These findings show that family pressure, religious conflict, financial difficulties, and custody or legal issues create complex and deeply personal barriers for reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage. Although reported by a small number of respondents, the qualitative responses reveal serious life challenges that go far beyond simple financial concerns. The participants’ statements show that some women face uncertainty about ending previous non-Muslim marriages, fear of legal consequences, and concern for the safety and custody of their children.

Financial instability further complicates this process, especially when women feel pressure to wait until all material needs are prepared before marriage. At the same time, religious differences with former spouses and unresolved legal status leave many women confused

about what steps are Islamically and legally correct. These findings indicate that reverted women often need not only emotional support, but also legal guidance, family mediation, and religious counselling to safely resolve past marriages, protect their children, and move forward toward a stable and lawful future marriage.

4.3.7 Community Exclusion and Isolation

Quantitative Evidence:

This indicates that, in Figure 4.5, those two respondents (0.7%) identified the lack of credible online marriage support platforms as a challenge.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no.149):

“Vetting who is the right spouse (red flags), support from the community to find the right spouse (because no one wants the responsibility of “if it goes wrong” and no one wants to help when it goes wrong), knowing the rights and obligations of spouses in Islam (vs western marriage legalities), knowing what is cultural and what is religious in marriage.”

Participant no. 239: “No Muslim family to help, falling into haram with Muslim men who take advantage of them, not seeking proper knowledge of the Deen”

Interpretation:

These findings show that community exclusion and isolation place reverted Muslim women in a vulnerable and unsupported position when seeking marriage. The qualitative responses indicate that many women lack family assistance, community guidance, and trusted individuals who are willing to take responsibility in helping them choose a suitable spouse. The fear of blame if a marriage fails appears to discourage community members from offering support, leaving reverted women to navigate the process alone.

The participants’ statements also reveal confusion about Islamic rights and obligations, differences between cultural and religious practices, and uncertainty regarding Western legal systems. This lack of guidance increases the risk of entering inappropriate relationships or falling into haram, particularly when some men take advantage of women who lack protection and knowledge. These findings highlight the urgent need for stronger community involvement, reliable mentorship, and accessible Islamic education to protect reverted women from isolation, exploitation, and harmful marriage experiences.

4.3.8 Legal or Documentation Barrier

Quantitative Evidence:

This is indicated in Figure 4.5 where two respondents (0.7%) identified legal or documentation challenges as a barrier.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no.268):

“Participant said that some marriage processes require documentation and that she doesn’t have it, and that she has no family, and faces difficulty in name change.”

Interpretation:

Even rare legal/documentation challenges can block marriage arrangements and create stress. Community legal support or guidance could help reverted women navigate these obstacles.

4.3.9 Other Challenge

Quantitative Evidence:

In Figure 4.5, it is indicated that the four respondents (1.5%) reported experiencing community exclusion.

Qualitative Evidence (Participant no. 255):

“A lot of Muslim brothers have a revert fetish and see us as an easy target to manipulate. It's not easy to find a genuine brother who has good intentions. Another challenge is that they often look down on us and think that we are less than born-Muslims.”

Another Participant no. 244:
“This anti-Muslim society creates many hindrances to the parents and whole family regardless of mine

This situation turned me into lots of regrets that I'm not able to accept Islam in front of society.”

Interpretation:

These findings show that community exclusion and negative social attitudes create serious emotional and social challenges for reverted Muslim women. Participants described being treated as easy targets by some men with selfish intentions, experiencing manipulation, and

feeling looked down upon compared to born-Muslims. At the same time, societal pressure and anti-Muslim sentiment caused regret and made it difficult for women to openly practice and embrace Islam.

This combination of exploitation, judgment, and social isolation reduces access to guidance, potential partners, and emotional support, leaving reverted women vulnerable and lonely. The findings highlight the urgent need for inclusive community initiatives, mentorship programs, and safe support networks to empower reverted women, protect them from manipulation, and help them feel accepted and supported in their faith and marriage journey.

4.4 Impacts of these challenges

As discussed earlier, newly reverted Muslim women face challenges in seeking marriage, but these happen for social, emotional, and personal reasons, which impact them by disturbing their mental health, family relationships, community socializing, and their married life. To grasp the full scope of these struggles by newly reverted Muslim women through their experiences will help to figure out the solutions which benefit them.

4.4.1 Mental Health Issues (Stress, Anxiety, Depression)

Quantitative Evidence:

This is shown in Figure 4.6 that a total of 18 out of 271 respondents (6.6%) reported experiencing mental health challenges, such as stress, anxiety, or depression, due to difficulties in seeking marriage.

Interpretation:

These findings show that a notable number of reverted women experience mental health stress as a result of marriage challenges. This likely comes from a lack of guidance, limited support, and fear of unsuitable proposals. Emotional support, mentorship, and community programs are important to help reverted women protect their mental well-being during the marriage process.

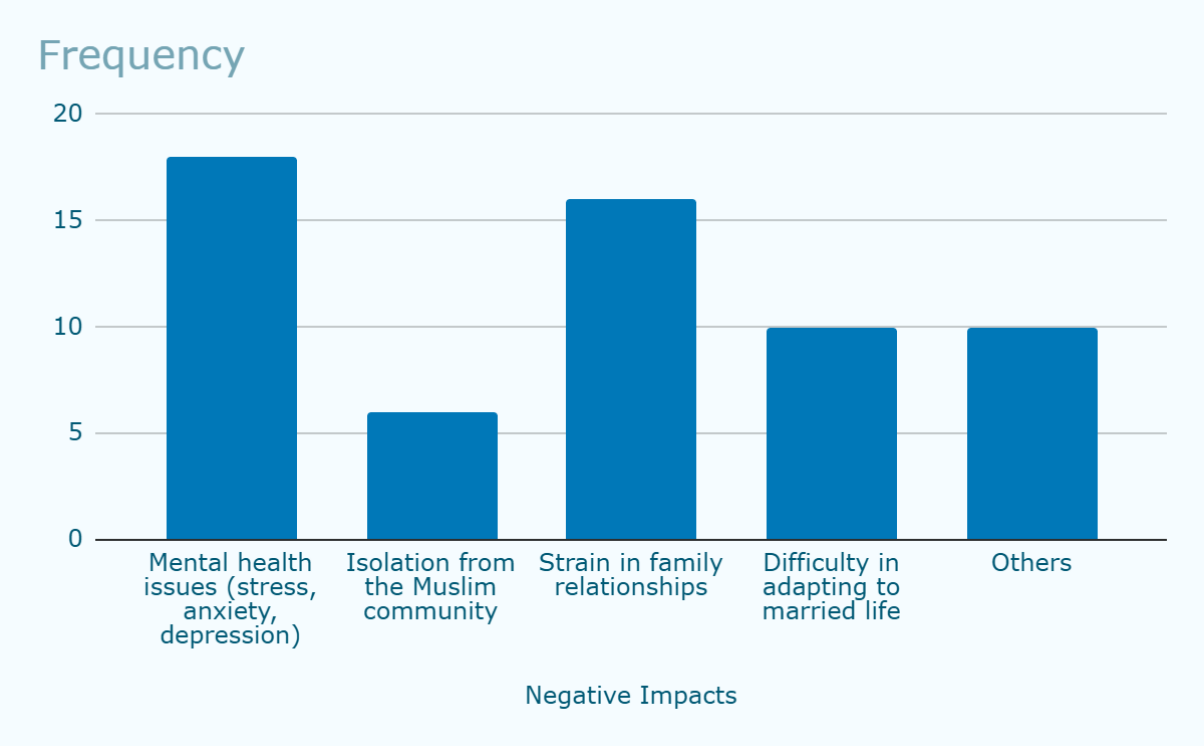


Figure 4.6: Negative Impacts Experienced by Respondents (n = 271).

The chart shows the frequency of reported negative impacts, including mental health issues, isolation from the Muslim community, strain in family relationships, difficulty in adapting to married life, and other impacts.

4.4.2 Isolation from the Muslim Community

Quantitative Evidence:

As shown in Figure 4.6, six respondents (2.2%) reported feeling isolated from the Muslim community because of their status as reverted women.

Interpretation:

Although fewer in number, isolation can leave reverted women without guidance or social support, increasing vulnerability to mistakes, exploitation, and emotional stress. Inclusive community programs and mentorship initiatives can help reduce isolation and provide a sense of belonging.

4.4.3 Strain in Family Relationships

Quantitative Evidence:

A total of 16 respondents (5.9%) reported experiencing strain in family relationships due to their reversion and pursuit of marriage, as shown in Figure 4.6.

Interpretation:

Family disapproval and conflict can create emotional tension and reduce access to guidance during the marriage process. These findings suggest the importance of family counseling, awareness programs, and community education to bridge understanding and reduce conflict for reverted women.

4.4.4 Difficulty in Adapting to Married Life

Quantitative Evidence:

Ten respondents (3.7%) reported difficulty in adapting to married life, often due to lack of prior guidance and support, as shown in Figure 4.6

Interpretation:

Insufficient preparation before marriage can make adjusting to married life stressful. Mentorship, premarital counselling, and post-marriage guidance could help reverted women navigate early marital challenges and build stronger relationships.

4.4.5 Other Impacts

Quantitative Evidence:

As shown in 4.6 Figure ten respondents (3.7%) reported experiencing other negative impacts, such as social pressure, uncertainty, or personal regret.

Interpretation:

These results indicate that reverted women face additional emotional and social challenges beyond mental health, isolation, or family strain. Community awareness, education, and support programs can help reduce these burdens and provide safer environments for reverted women.

4.5 Suggested solutions from respondents

Based on the survey responses, reverted Muslim women suggested several measures to address the challenges they face in seeking marriage. These solutions reflect the need for support at family, community, and institutional levels, as well as the importance of guidance and education to ensure safe and successful marital experiences. The suggestions have been grouped into key themes for clarity.

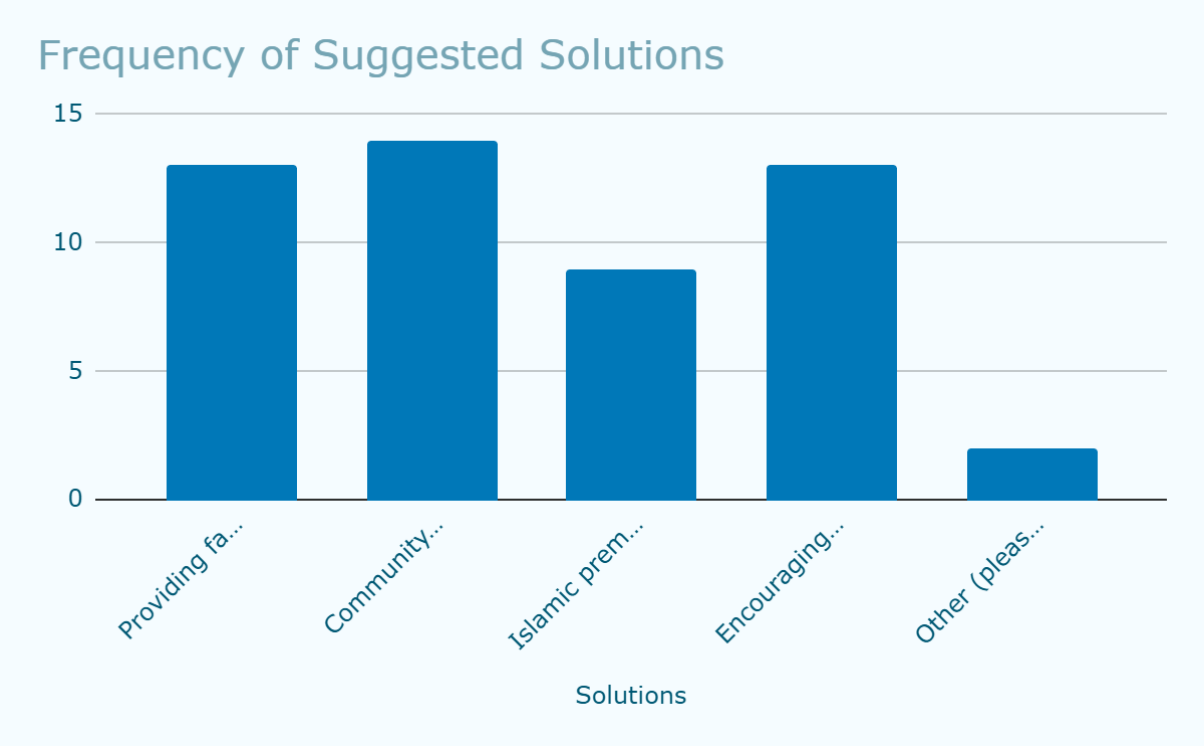


Figure 4.7: Suggested Solutions by Reverted Muslim Women to Address Marriage Challenges (n = 271)

4.5.1 Family Counselling and Support

Figure 4.7 indicates that a significant number of respondents highlighted the importance of family support in easing the marriage process. Reverted women suggested that family counselling programs could help parents understand Islamic teachings, reduce conflicts, and provide emotional backing. By improving family awareness, women are likely to receive guidance and advocacy similar to what born Muslims benefit from through their families.

Interpretation:

Providing structured family support can help bridge misunderstandings, reduce emotional strain, and empower reverted women to make informed marital decisions.

4.5.2 Community Awareness and Education on Reverts' Challenges

Many participants suggested raising awareness within the Muslim community about the unique challenges faced by reverted women. This includes reducing stigma, combating misconceptions, and fostering inclusion in community events and marriage support systems.

Interpretation:

Community education can create a more supportive environment, increase acceptance, and ensure that reverted women have access to mentorship, guidance, and safe social networks.

4.5.3 Islamic Premarital Counselling

Respondents emphasized the need for Islamic premarital counselling tailored to reverted women. Such programs could address marital rights, religious obligations, expectations, and conflict resolution strategies, helping women prepare for marriage both practically and spiritually.

Interpretation:

Premarital counselling equips reverted women with knowledge and confidence, reducing vulnerability to unsuitable proposals and improving marital success.

4.5.4 Inclusive and Open-Minded Matchmaking within the Community

Several respondents suggested that matchmaking services within the Muslim community should be inclusive and open-minded toward reverted women. They highlighted the need for platforms or trusted networks that consider compatibility, religious commitment, and ethical conduct rather than only family background or social status.

Interpretation:

Inclusive matchmaking ensures that reverted women have equitable access to potential partners while minimizing risks associated with exploitation or mismatched expectations.

4.5.5 Other Suggestions from Revert Muslim Women Respondents

Additional recommendations focused on systemic solutions to strengthen community support, education, and safeguards for reverted women seeking marriage. These have been categorized into sub-themes:

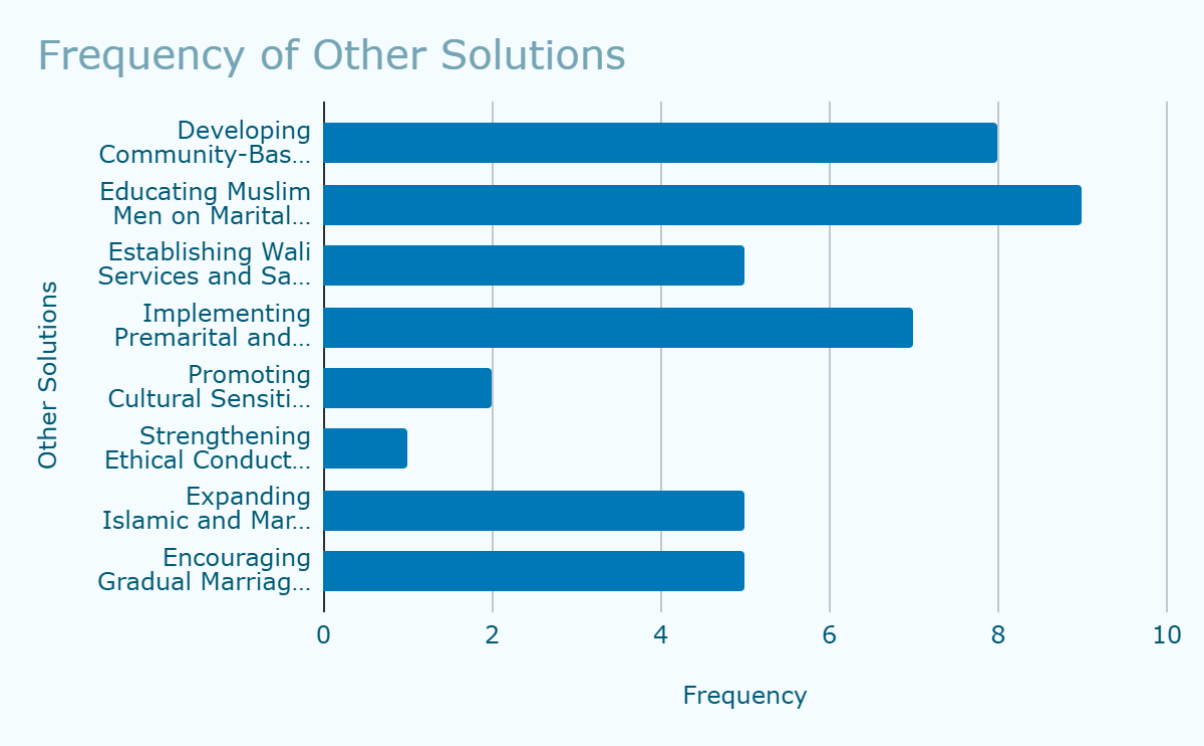


Figure 4.8: Suggested Solutions by Reverted Muslim Women to Address Marriage Challenges (n = 271)

4.5.5.1 Developing Community-Based Support Systems for Reverts

As shown in Figure 4.8, 8 respondents emphasized creating dedicated support structures, such as mentoring groups, social networks, and safe spaces, to provide guidance, advice, and emotional support throughout the marriage process.

4.5.5.2 Educating Muslim Men on Marital Ethics and Responsibilities

9 respondents suggested training and awareness programs for Muslim men to ensure they understand ethical conduct, responsibilities, and the spiritual importance of marriage, which would reduce exploitation and mismatched expectations as seen in Figure 4.8.

4.5.5.3 Establishing Walī Services and Safeguarding Mechanisms

5 suggested to compensate for the absence of family guardians, respondents recommended community-based Walī services to guide and protect reverted women during marriage arrangements, ensuring proposals are legitimate and ethically conducted.

4.5.5.4 Implementing Premarital and Postmarital Counselling Programs

7 reverted Muslim women suggested having more than premarital counselling; respondents suggested postmarital guidance to help women adapt to married life, resolve conflicts, and maintain healthy relationships, especially when they lack family support.

4.5.5.5 Promoting Cultural Sensitivity and Distinguishing Islam from Local Traditions

1 of them highlighted the need to educate both men and women about Islamic teachings versus local cultural practices. Understanding this distinction can prevent confusion, misinterpretation, and unnecessary conflict within marriages.

4.5.5.6 Strengthening Ethical Conduct and Accountability in Muslim Marriages

1 of them suggested developing frameworks to hold spouses accountable, promote honesty, and prevent abuse or exploitation, ensuring that marriages are conducted with integrity.

4.5.5.7 Expanding Islamic and Marital Education for Reverts

Five of the reverted Muslim women wanted educational programs for reverted women, which were recommended to cover Quranic guidance, Sunnah practices, marital responsibilities, and personal development, empowering women to make informed decisions about marriage.

4.5.5.8 Encouraging Gradual Marriage Timing After Conversion

5 respondents in the survey advised gradual timing for marriage after reverting, allowing women to strengthen their understanding of Islam, build social and financial stability, and make well-informed choices regarding their spouses.

Interpretation:

The solutions suggested by respondents reflect a holistic approach to addressing challenges faced by reverted women. They emphasize the need for family involvement and counselling, community awareness and inclusion, structured mentorship and support networks, and education for both women and men on Islamic marital ethics

Together, these measures aim to protect, guide, and empower reverted women, ensuring safer, smoother, and more fulfilling marriage experiences.

4.6 Open-Ended Suggestions for Improvement

The open-ended suggestions provided by the respondents regarding ways to improve the marriage process for newly reverted Muslim women. The responses were thematically analysed and grouped into key categories based on recurring ideas and recommendations. Figure 4.8 illustrates the main themes, along with their respective frequencies and percentages.

The most frequently suggested solution was Pre-Marital Counselling and Education (41 responses, 15.1%), followed by Role of Walī / Guardianship Support (31 responses, 11.4%) and Mentorship and Guidance from Experienced Muslims (28 responses, 10.3%). Other commonly highlighted themes included Cultural Sensitivity and Integration (28 responses, 10.3%), Safe and Trusted Matchmaking Services (23 responses, 8.5%), and Islamic Principles and Faith-Centred Approach (18 responses, 6.6%). These findings indicate that respondents strongly emphasized the need for structured guidance, community support, ethical safeguards, and Islamic education to protect reverted women and facilitate healthier marriage processes.

The following sub-sections discuss each major theme in detail, supported by participant quotations and interpretation.

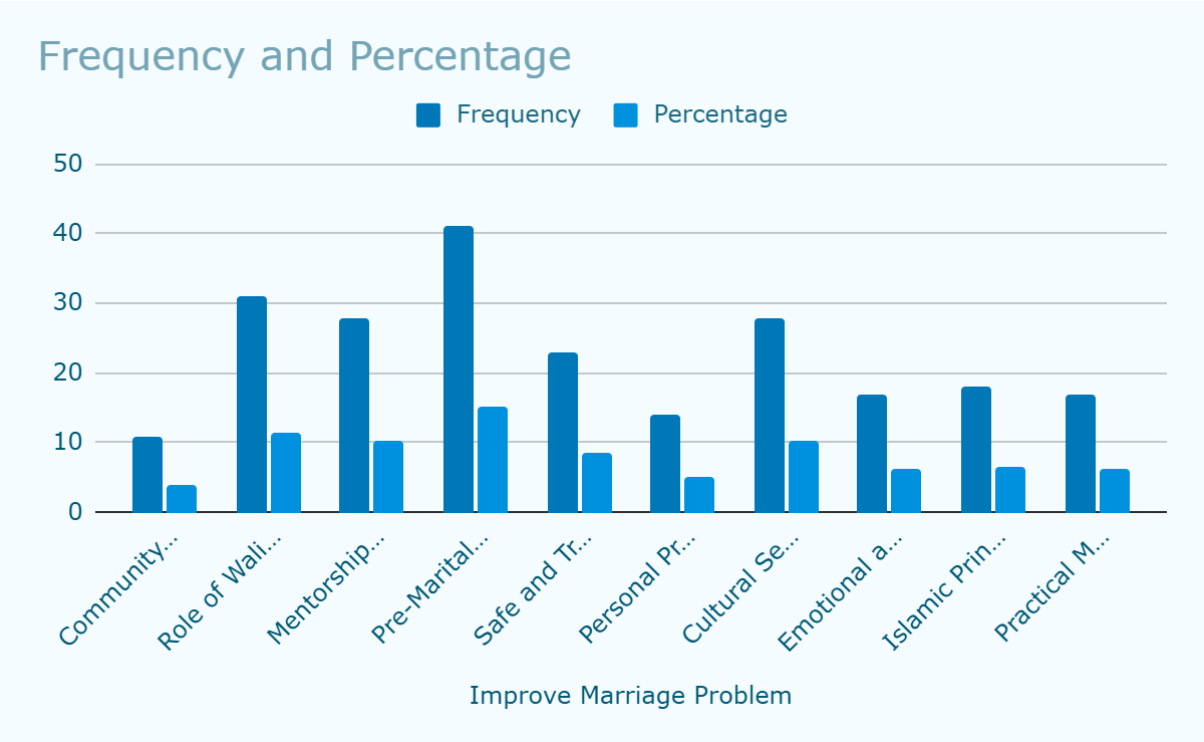


Figure 4.8: Suggested Solutions by Reverted Muslim Women to Address Marriage Challenges (n = 271)

4.6.1 Alternative Walī Support Models

Participant Voices: role of Walī / guardianship support – 31 responses, 11.4%

Participant No. 95 said:

“There should be a trusted Walī service or organization to guide women like me since my family cannot be my Walī.”

Participant No. 127 shared:

“Sometimes we just need a responsible Muslim brother to act as Walī temporarily, someone who understands Islamic guidance and can ensure our safety.”

Interpretation:

Participants emphasized the importance of establishing alternative Walī support systems for reverted women who lack Muslim family members. The absence of a Walī leaves many women vulnerable and unsupported during the marriage process. Trusted community-based Walī services or appointed guardians can provide guidance, protection, and advocacy, ensuring that reverted women are not left to navigate marriage matters alone.

4.6.2 Vetting, Background Checks, and Accountability

Participant Voices: related to: practical measures and checks – 17 responses, 6.3%

Participant No. 193 suggested:

“Every man should be checked properly before introducing him to reverted women. We need to know intentions, character, and background to prevent exploitation.

”Interpretation:

Respondents highlighted the need for accountability and careful screening in the marriage process. Proper vetting and background checks can reduce the risk of deception, manipulation, and unsuitable proposals. This reflects the concern that reverted women are

often targeted due to their lack of family protection and limited community networks. Structured accountability mechanisms could significantly improve safety and trust.

4.6.3 Post-Nikah Support and Monitoring

Participant Voices:

Participant No. 244 stated:

“After marriage, there should be someone to check in, provide advice, and ensure things are going well. Otherwise, women like me are left alone and vulnerable.”

Interpretation:

Participants stressed that support should not end at the time of marriage. Continuous post-nikah guidance and monitoring can help address early marital difficulties and prevent neglect or abuse. Regular follow-ups by community mentors or counsellors may provide reassurance and reduce the emotional isolation experienced by reverted women after marriage.

4.6.4 Mentorship and Emotional Support for Reverts

Participant Voices: Mentorship and Guidance from Experienced Muslims – 28 responses, 10.3%, and Emotional and Social Support Systems – 17 responses, 6.3%.

Participant No. 255 shared:

“We need mentors who have experience in Islamic marriage, someone to talk to when confused or stressed, and emotional support from people who understand our journey.”

Interpretation:

Respondents emphasized the need for mentorship programs and emotional support networks. Guidance from experienced Muslims can help reverted women navigate marital expectations, reduce anxiety, and build confidence. Emotional support also plays a vital role in protecting mental well-being and preventing feelings of isolation during the marriage process.

4.6.5 Legal Awareness and Marriage Contract Rights

Participant Voices:

Participant No. 127 said:

“I don’t know what my rights are in marriage contracts. If I want to leave an abusive marriage or protect my children, I need clear legal guidance.”

Interpretation:

Legal awareness was identified as an essential protective factor. Many reverted women lack knowledge about Islamic marriage contracts, rights, and legal procedures. Providing education on legal rights and marital conditions can empower women to make informed decisions and protect themselves in cases of conflict, abuse, or separation.4.6.6 Protection, Modesty, and Safe Communication

4.6.6 Protection, Modesty, and Safe Communication

Participant Voices:

Participant No. 149 explained:

“Sometimes it’s hard to communicate safely with potential partners online. We need systems that ensure modesty and prevent harassment or misuse.”

Interpretation:

Participants highlighted the importance of safe and ethical communication platforms. Ensuring modesty, supervision, and respectful interaction reduces the risk of harassment and exploitation. Trusted matchmaking systems with clear guidelines can create a safer environment for reverted women to interact with potential spouses.

4.6.7 No-Rush Marriage Principle

Participant Voices: Pre-Marital Counselling and Education – 41 responses, 15.1% and Personal Preparation and Islamic Knowledge for Reverts – 14 responses, 5.2%

Participant No. 102 shared:

“Women shouldn’t feel rushed to marry immediately after converting. Time is needed to learn, grow, and choose the right person.”

Interpretation:

Respondents recommended avoiding pressure to marry immediately after conversion. Allowing time for learning, personal development, and emotional stability can reduce

mistakes and improve marital outcomes. Gradual preparation enables reverted women to make informed and confident decisions regarding marriage.

4.6.8 Community Education and Cultural Reform

Participant Voices: Community Awareness and Education – 11 responses, 4.1%; Cultural Sensitivity and Integration – 28 responses, 10.3%; and Islamic Principles and Faith-Centred Approach – 18 responses, 6.6%.

Participant No. 178 said:

“The community needs to understand that reverted women are not ‘different’ or inferior. Education and awareness programs can change attitudes and reduce stigma.”

Interpretation:
Community education and cultural reform were strongly emphasized as necessary for long-term improvement. Misconceptions, stigma, and cultural barriers often marginalize reverted women. Awareness programs, cultural sensitivity training, and reinforcement of Islamic principles can promote inclusion, reduce prejudice, and create a more supportive environment for marriage and social integration.

Chapter 5: Proposed Solutions, Recommendations, and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the proposed solutions, recommendations, and concluding reflections based on the findings of the present study. While Chapter Four focused on analysing the challenges, impacts, and suggestions provided by newly reverted Muslim women, this chapter moves towards offering practical and faith-based responses to those challenges.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, it aims to propose solutions grounded in Islamic principles and supported by the empirical findings of the study. Second, it provides recommendations for families, communities, Islamic institutions, and policymakers to improve the marriage process for reverted Muslim women. Finally, it offers a concluding summary of the study, highlights its contributions, acknowledges its limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

The solutions and recommendations presented in this chapter are directly informed by the quantitative and qualitative findings discussed in Chapter Four. They reflect the voices of the respondents, the recurring themes identified through thematic analysis, and the practical needs observed throughout the research. By linking research evidence with Islamic guidance and community practice, this chapter seeks to contribute to safer, more ethical, and more supportive marriage processes for newly reverted Muslim women.

5.2 Solutions and Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed in Chapter Four, it is evident that reverted Muslim women face multiple challenges when seeking marriage, including lack of family support, limited community guidance, and vulnerability to exploitation. In response to these challenges, this section presents proposed solutions and recommendations aimed at addressing the social, emotional, and practical needs of reverted women. The recommendations are structured into key areas, including faith-based guidance, institutional and community interventions, policy measures, and the roles of parents, guardians, and mentors. The aim is to provide a

comprehensive framework that promotes safe, ethical, and supportive marriage practices while empowering reverted women in their marital journey.

5.2.1 Faith-Based Solutions

Faith-based solutions form the foundation of addressing the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. The findings of this study show that many difficulties arise due to lack of Islamic guidance, absence of proper guardianship, fear of exploitation, and uncertainty about marital rights and responsibilities. Therefore, solutions grounded in Islamic teachings are essential to ensure that the marriage process remains ethical, protective, and spiritually meaningful for reverted women.

Islam views marriage as a source of tranquillity, affection, and mercy. Allah states in the Qur'an that He created spouses so that human beings may find peace in them and placed between them love and compassion. Allah highlights in the Qur'an that marriage in Islam is intended to provide emotional security and mutual care, which is particularly important for reverted women who often lack family support and guidance during the marriage process. (International S. , Chapter Ar-Room; Verse 21, 1997) Strengthening Islamic understanding about the true purpose of marriage can help protect reverted women from harmful experiences and unrealistic expectations. Allah says in the Qur'an: "And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good" (International S. , Chapter Al-Nisa; Verse 19, 1997) This highlights that husbands need to show kindness and treat their wives fairly. These teachings support the need for ethical practices, sincere intentions, and protective measures for reverted women who may not have a traditional Walī or family support.

One of the key faith-based solutions is the provision of proper Islamic guidance before marriage. The study revealed that many reverted women struggle due to limited access to reliable Islamic knowledge and counselling. Regular premarital education programs based on Qur'an and Sunnah can help women understand their rights, responsibilities, and the correct Islamic approach to marriage. Such programs can also clarify important matters related to consent, mahr, guardianship, and marital conduct, thereby reducing confusion and vulnerability.

Ethical conduct and sincerity in marriage are also essential principles in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him advised that a person should be chosen for marriage primarily based on religious commitment and character. He said, “A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So, you should marry the religious woman; otherwise, you will be a loser.” (Bukhari, 2026) Book: Nikah; Chapter: Husband and wife should have the same religion; Hadith: Ṣaḥīḥ Al- Bukhari 5090.

Faith-based solutions further include strengthening spiritual and emotional support systems within the Muslim community. Reverted women often face stress, isolation, and uncertainty due to the absence of family guidance and community networks. Islamic teachings encourage compassion, mutual assistance, and care for one another among believers. Providing access to spiritual counselling, mentorship from knowledgeable Muslims, and supportive learning circles can help reverted women build confidence, strengthen faith, and make informed marital decisions.

Overall, faith-based solutions provide a framework that combines spiritual guidance, ethical responsibility, and emotional care. By reinforcing Islamic principles related to marriage, character, sincerity, and mutual respect, communities and institutions can create marriage processes that are safer, more just, and more supportive for newly reverted Muslim women. These measures not only address the challenges identified in this study but also align marriage practices with the values of mercy, justice, and responsibility emphasized in Islam.

5.2.1.1 Emotional and Spiritual Coping Strategies for Reverted Women

Many newly reverted Muslim women feel alone, confused, or even guilty about their faith, which can sometimes lead to emotional struggles or self-conflict. These feelings often become stronger when they do not have family support, mentors, or a community to turn to. Helping them overcome these challenges requires guidance that combines faith and practical support.

Spiritual support is very important. The Qur’an reminds believers: “Do not grieve; Indeed, Allah is with us” (International S. , Chapter At-Tawbah, Verse 40, 1997). This verse shows that Allah is always with them, giving comfort even when they feel lonely or unsure. Reverted women can use this support by praying regularly, doing dhikr, and reading the

Qur'an, focusing on verses that bring hope and strength.

Being part of a supportive community is also very helpful. Joining learning circles or having a mentor, especially other revert sisters, allows them to share their experiences, get advice, and feel less alone. If feelings of sadness or stress become too strong, seeking counsel or professional help can also be useful. When spiritual practice and community support are combined, women can feel stronger, more confident, and better able to face challenges, including those in the marriage process. This approach helps them deal with both their emotions and the social difficulties they face.

5.2.2 Institutional and Community Recommendations

Institutional and community support plays a vital role in addressing the challenges reverted Muslim women face when seeking marriage. Findings from Chapter Four highlighted that many reverted women lack family support, face social isolation, and have limited access to trustworthy guidance. Structured support from mosques, Islamic centres, and community organizations can help fill these gaps, ensuring safer and more inclusive marriage processes.

Mosques and Islamic centres can act as hubs for guidance, education, and safe matchmaking. They can provide educational workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs specifically designed for reverted women, helping them understand Islamic marital principles, their rights, and practical considerations before and after marriage. Such programs can also train community volunteers or mentors to act as temporary Walī or advisors, particularly for women without family support. According to Minhaj Et Talibin: A Manual of Muhammadan Law (According to the School of Shāfiʿī) by Imam al-Nawawi, the Walī (guardian) must be a qualified Muslim male, with priority given to close paternal relatives, such as the father, grandfather, or adult brothers. If no suitable male relative exists, a Muslim judge or qualified authority can act as the Walī to ensure the marriage contract is valid and the woman's rights are protected. The primary duties of the Walī include ensuring the woman's consent, verifying that the prospective marriage complies with Islamic law, and protecting her interests throughout the process of contracting the marriage. This structured guardianship is essential to prevent coercion, exploitation, and mistakes, particularly for reverted women who may lack family guidance. (Imam Al-Nawawi, 1914)

In addition to formal guardianship, there is a critical need to educate reverted Muslim women about Shariah-compliant interaction during the marriage process, particularly when engaging with Muslim marriage applications or online platforms. Many reverted women may assume that platforms labelled as “Islamic” automatically ensure religious compliance, without being fully aware of the boundaries governing communication between non-mahram men and women. Islamic teachings emphasize the prevention of situations that may lead to emotional attachment, manipulation, or moral compromise. Allah instructs believers in the Qur’an to protect chastity and avoid pathways leading to immorality, stating, “And do not approach Zinā. Indeed, it is an immorality and an evil way” (International S. , Chapter Al-Isra; Verse 32, 1997). Prophetic guidance further reinforces protective boundaries, as the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “No man is alone with a woman except that the third of them is Shayṭān”. (At-Tirmidhī, 2026) Hadith: At-Tirmidhī; Book: Mishkat al-Masabih, Al-Nikah; Chapter: Looking at a Woman who is asked in Marriage, and an Explanation of what may not be seen - Section 2; Hadith no. 39

Accordingly, community institutions should provide clear guidance on appropriate modes of communication, emphasizing the involvement of a Walī or a trusted representative in facilitating discussions and supervising interactions. Such education can protect reverted women from emotional exploitation, misrepresentation, and unsuitable relationships while promoting ethically grounded and Shariah-compliant marriage practices.

Community-based mentorship programs are another important recommendation. Experienced Muslim women and men can offer guidance, answer questions, and provide emotional support throughout the marriage process. These mentors can help reverted women evaluate proposals, understand compatibility, and navigate cultural or religious differences, reducing the risks of exploitation and emotional stress.

Additionally, inclusive and open-minded approaches to matchmaking within the community are essential. Community initiatives should ensure that reverted women are treated fairly, with respect and dignity, rather than being marginalized or judged for their reversion. Creating safe and transparent networks for introductions, discussions, and guidance can help reverted women access compatible partners while being fully informed and protected.

5.2.2.1 Equality of all Muslims

Many participants in this study expressed that feelings of isolation, exclusion, or lack of welcome from the Muslim community made their emotional burden heavier. This highlights that it is not only the responsibility of reverted women to seek support but also the responsibility of the community to create a welcoming, respectful, and compassionate environment for all believers, especially those who are new to Islam.

Islam teaches that all believers are equal and that no one has superiority over another except by God-consciousness and good character. The Qur'an states that all humans were created from a single pair and that diversity in peoples and tribes is meant for recognition, not for arrogance or exclusion, and that the most honoured in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Allah reminds His people, "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (International S. , Chapter Al-Hujrat, Verse 10, 1997)

5.2.2.2 Brotherhood and Love

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him reminded the believers that true faith is linked to how they treat one another. He said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself." (Al-Bukhari, 2026) [Book: Belief; Chapter: To like for one's (Muslim's) brother what one likes for himself is a part of faith; Hadith: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Hadith No.13]. This teaches that Muslims should desire good and support for others just as they desire it for themselves.

Building on the principles of equality and brotherhood, communities should actively support and guide reverted women. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also reminded believers that true faith is linked to how they treat one another. He said, "None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his brother" - or he said "for his neighbour" - "that which he loves for himself." (Al-Muslim, 2026) [(Book: The Book of Faith; Chapter: To like for one's (Muslim's) brother what one likes for himself is a part of faith; Hadith: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim; Hadith no. 45a], teaching that Muslims should desire good and support for others just as they desire it for themselves.

5.2.2.3 Encouragement to help

Muslims in the community should remember how Allah reminds them in the Qur'an to treat newcomers with kindness and care. They should not only welcome them but also make them feel fully part of the community, giving them attention and support, and never making them feel inferior or isolated. The example of the Ansar and Muhājirūn in early Islamic history shows this perfectly: the Ansar shared their homes, wealth, and resources with the Muhājirūn, giving them priority even while they themselves were in need. These historical examples serve as a model for how modern Muslim communities should welcome and support reverted women today. The Qur'an praises this behaviour, saying, "They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful." (International S. , Chapter Al-Ḥashr, Verse 9, 1997) This shows the ideal of brotherhood, compassion, and selfless support.

5.2.2.4 Practical advice

Communities should actively welcome reverted women, provide mentorship, guidance, and safe spaces for learning, and encourage others to help them in their spiritual and social journey. Helping others in learning, giving good advice, and supporting them emotionally is rewarded by Allah and strengthens the bonds within the community. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told us that giving good advice is charity: "and a good word is a Sadaqa." (Muslim, 2026) [(Book: The Book of Zakat; Chapter: The word charity (Sadaqah) may apply to all good deeds Ma'ruf; Hadith: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim; Hadith no. 1009] By following these teachings, communities can foster a culture of unity, compassion, and faith-based solidarity that benefits both the women and the wider Muslim society.

In conclusion, institutional and community recommendations focus on providing reliable, faith-based, and practical support structures. By empowering reverted women through education, mentorship, and inclusive programs, communities can actively reduce isolation, promote ethical practices, and strengthen the overall marriage process for those seeking to build families in accordance with Islamic principles.

5.2.3 Policy Recommendation

Policy-level interventions can play a significant role in addressing the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. The study findings revealed that many reverted women experience isolation, lack of guidance, and vulnerability to exploitation, highlighting the need for structured support at the community and institutional level.

Firstly, the establishment of revert-focused counselling programs is essential. These programs, offered through Islamic centres, educational institutions, or online platforms, can provide practical guidance on marital rights, partner selection, and legal considerations. They can also offer emotional support, help women navigate complex family or cultural dynamics, and empower them to make informed decisions.

Secondly, awareness campaigns targeting both the Muslim community and wider society can reduce misconceptions and social stigma. Many reverted women reported facing prejudice, discrimination, or exclusion due to their religious status. Policy measures can promote public education about reversion, the rights of reverted women, and ethical practices in marriage, encouraging communities to respond with understanding and support rather than judgment.

Furthermore, policy initiatives can encourage collaboration between mosques, NGOs, and online platforms to create safe, regulated spaces for introductions, mentorship, and guidance. Standards for ethical matchmaking, background verification, and post-marriage support can be implemented to protect reverted women and ensure that Islamic principles are upheld.

In summary, policy recommendations aim to institutionalize support for reverted Muslim women, addressing gaps in guidance, protection, and awareness. By combining counselling programs, public education, and regulated support networks, these measures can promote safer, more ethical, and inclusive marriage processes, reducing risks and empowering women in their journey.

5.2.4 Role of Parents, Guardians, and Mentors

Parents, guardians, and mentors have a crucial role in supporting reverted Muslim women through the marriage process. Chapter Four revealed that many women face challenges due to the absence of family support, lack of a trusted Walī, and limited guidance, which increases vulnerability to unsuitable proposals and emotional stress. Strengthening the involvement of responsible adults can help address these gaps effectively.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide emotional and practical support to their daughters or wards, even if they initially struggle to understand the needs of a reverted woman. By being involved in guidance, discussions about partner selection, and providing reassurance, they can reduce feelings of isolation, boost confidence, and ensure safer decision-making.

Mentors, particularly experienced Muslims knowledgeable about Islamic marital principles, can complement the role of family. They can provide advice on evaluating proposals, understanding compatibility, and navigating cultural or religious differences. By sharing their own experiences, they offer practical and emotional support to new reverts. This mentoring role aligns with the Qur'anic instruction to guide others with wisdom and good instruction: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best". (Qur'an 16:125) Mentors can also act as temporary Walī or advisors when family support is unavailable, ensuring that women have trustworthy guidance throughout the marriage process.

Additionally, parents, guardians, and mentors should promote ethical and faith-centred matchmaking. This includes emphasizing honesty, sincerity, and adherence to Islamic principles among prospective partners, while guiding reverted women to make informed and confident choices.

In conclusion, the active engagement of parents, guardians, and mentors is essential to empower reverted Muslim women. Their involvement provides emotional support, practical guidance, and protection, creating an environment where women can pursue marriage safely, confidently, and in accordance with Islamic teachings.

5.2.5 Action plan

An action plan is essential to ensure that the solutions and recommendations proposed in this study are effectively implemented and reach reverted Muslim women who need guidance and support. Based on the findings of Chapter Four, a coordinated approach involving Muslim organizations, community leaders, and online platforms can create safe, structured, and faith-based support systems.

Firstly, Muslim organizations and community centres can establish dedicated programs for reverted women, providing mentorship, premarital education, and access to safe

matchmaking services. These programs should include religious guidance, practical advice, and emotional support to help women navigate the challenges identified in the study.

Secondly, community leaders and scholars can facilitate educational sessions for both reverted women and their families, emphasizing Islamic marital ethics, the role of a Walī, and the responsibilities of spouses. Such sessions can foster understanding, reduce family and societal pressure, and encourage ethical conduct in the marriage process.

Thirdly, online platforms should adopt strict safety measures and verification processes to protect reverted women. Systems for background checks, accountability, and guidance during introductions can prevent exploitation and build trust. These platforms should also provide resources on Islamic teachings, marital rights, and post-marriage support.

Finally, collaboration between organizations, mosques, mentors, and online services can create a comprehensive network that supports reverted women before, during, and after marriage. By coordinating these efforts, communities can ensure that women have reliable guidance, emotional support, and practical tools to make informed decisions.

In summary, the action plan outlines a step-by-step approach to implementing faith-based, community-supported, and practical measures. When executed effectively, it can reduce vulnerability, empower reverted women, and promote ethical, safe, and successful marriages within the Muslim community.

5.3 Conclusion

Through this research, the study explored the multifaceted challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking marriage. From the outset, it became clear that their journey is influenced by a combination of social, cultural, religious, and economic factors, as highlighted in the Statement of the Problem (1.2). The extended family structure, community expectations, and societal norms often shape the opportunities and limitations these women face. Many participants reported that the absence of family advocacy, guidance from Islamic authorities, and supportive community networks significantly delayed their marriage prospects and increased emotional stress.

The findings revealed that marital expectations, including preferences for same-ethnic marriages, traditional gender roles, and cultural compatibility, create additional barriers for

women whose families or previous communities are non-Muslim. This aligns with the findings in Chapter Four, where a significant proportion of participants reported challenges such as lack of Walī support, family opposition, and social stigma. Education and religious knowledge also played a crucial role; women with limited access to Islamic guidance felt less confident navigating marriage, whereas those with stronger religious literacy demonstrated better understanding of their rights and marriage procedures.

Economic and financial factors further complicated the marriage process. Expectations regarding housing, financial stability, and dowry influenced both the availability of suitable partners and the pace at which marriages could take place. Many participants experienced difficulties due to the lack of community centres and supportive networks, which limited their ability to connect with knowledgeable Muslims and obtain proper Islamic marriage guidance, directly reflecting Objective 4 of this research. In addition, while some participants used online marriage platforms, these were often ineffective in providing safe, faith-compliant, and culturally sensitive matches, demonstrating the relevance of Objective 6.

Another significant finding concerned social capital and community integration. Women without strong connections to Muslim networks or access to supportive environments expressed greater vulnerability to exploitation, emotional stress, and poor decision-making. This was further exacerbated by Islamophobia, cultural misunderstanding, and societal judgments, which reinforced feelings of isolation. The study also confirmed that legal and marital status issues influenced women's ability to pursue Sharia-compliant marriages, particularly for those seeking to exit previous non-Islamic marriages or navigating complex legal arrangements.

By examining these issues alongside the study objectives and research questions, the findings indicate that the challenges faced by reverted women are not only individual but systemic. They are linked to gaps in community support, family guidance, mentorship, institutional awareness, and ethical matchmaking practices. These insights guided the development of the proposed solutions and recommendations presented in this chapter, including faith-based interventions, institutional and community support, mentorship programs, and legal and educational measures.

Overall, this study demonstrates that addressing the marriage challenges of newly reverted Muslim women requires a holistic approach that considers family, community, faith,

education, and socio-economic realities. Through targeted solutions and sustained community engagement, it is possible to create supportive environments where reverted women can pursue marriage confidently, safely, and in accordance with Islamic principles.

5.3.1 Summary of the Study

This study investigated the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women when seeking marriage, the social, emotional, and personal impacts of these challenges, and the solutions suggested by the participants themselves. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative survey data with thematic analysis of open-ended responses to provide a holistic understanding of the experiences of reverted women. The research was guided by the study objectives, which focused on identifying key barriers, examining their impacts, and exploring practical solutions based on faith.

The findings from Chapter Four revealed multiple layers of difficulties experienced by reverted women, including lack of Islamic guidance, absence of family support, social stigma, vulnerability to exploitation, and limited access to safe and trustworthy matchmaking processes. These challenges were shown to affect emotional well-being, family relationships, community participation, confidence in decision-making, and the ability to adapt to married life. A significant proportion of participants reported difficulties related to the absence of a Walī, family opposition, cultural incompatibility, and inadequate community support.

The study further demonstrated that institutional gaps, limited mentorship, and ineffective online marriage platforms contributed to insecurity and uncertainty during the marriage process. Women who lacked access to supportive Muslim networks were found to be more vulnerable to emotional stress and unsuitable proposals. These findings highlight that the challenges faced by reverted Muslim women are not only individual but also systemic, rooted in community practices, institutional limitations, and social attitudes.

Based on these findings, the proposed solutions and recommendations presented in this chapter aim to address the identified challenges in a practical, faith-based, and community-oriented manner. Faith-based solutions emphasize Islamic guidance, premarital education, and adherence to Islamic principles. Institutional and community recommendations focus on mentorship programs, support from mosques and Islamic centres, and inclusive and ethical

matchmaking practices. Policy recommendations highlight the importance of counselling programs, awareness initiatives, and regulated support networks.

In summary, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the marriage challenges faced by reverted Muslim women and offers structured solutions grounded in empirical evidence and Islamic teachings. By linking participants' experiences with practical recommendations, the study establishes a framework that can guide communities, institutions, and policymakers in supporting reverted women more effectively in their journey towards marriage.

5.3.2 Key Findings

The findings of this study reveal that newly reverted Muslim women face a complex combination of social, cultural, religious, and institutional challenges when seeking marriage. These challenges are interconnected and reflect the multidimensional nature of the marriage process within Muslim communities.

First, the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, including age, education level, occupation, and marital status, significantly influenced their marriage experiences, addressing Objective 1. Younger women often reported emotional vulnerability and lack of guidance, while older women faced concerns related to remarriage, stigma, and fewer proposals. Educational background affected confidence in decision-making, and occupational status shaped financial independence and marital expectations.

Second, access to Islamic knowledge varied widely among participants, fulfilling Objective 2. While some respondents had access to online classes, mentors, or Islamic centres, many relied on self-learning, creating uncertainty in religious rulings related to marriage, marital rights, and Walī responsibilities. Limited access to authentic guidance increased confusion and vulnerability throughout the marriage process.

Third, age, language barriers, safety concerns, and privacy issues directly affected participants' ability to identify suitable spouses, addressing Objective 3. Language barriers restricted communication, while fear of exploitation and harassment limited participation in both community-based and online marriage platforms. These factors often resulted in

hesitation, mistrust, and emotional stress.

Fourth, the lack of community centres and supportive Muslim environments had a significant impact on participants' marriage prospects, fulfilling Objective 4. Many reverted women reported social isolation, limited networks, and absence of reliable intermediaries. This reduced opportunities to meet suitable partners and obtain proper Islamic guidance, highlighting the importance of institutional and community support systems.

Fifth, exposure to non-Islamic dating practices influenced participants' perceptions and experiences, addressing Objective 5. Some struggled to maintain Sharia-compliant standards due to societal pressures, emotional loneliness, and limited guidance. This created internal conflicts between Islamic values and external expectations, increasing vulnerability to unsuitable relationships.

Sixth, current marriage applications and digital platforms were often ineffective in facilitating safe and Sharia-compliant matches, fulfilling Objective 6. Participants expressed concerns regarding lack of verification, inappropriate communication, and absence of Walī involvement. These platforms were perceived as risky, unregulated, and insufficiently aligned with Islamic principles.

Seventh, the availability and quality of marriage counselling and support groups were found to be limited, addressing Objective 7. Many respondents had no access to revert-focused counselling services and reported uncertainty in marital expectations, rights, and conflict resolution. The absence of specialised support contributed to marital dissatisfaction and post-Nikah vulnerability.

Eighth, the lack of nearby masjids and limited guidance from local imams affected clarity in the Islamic marriage contract process, fulfilling Objective 8. Participants reported confusion regarding mahr, contract conditions, Walī appointment, and post-marriage rights, weakening their ability to make informed decisions and protect their interests.

Ninth, several practical strategies supported faith preservation and emotional stability, addressing Objective 9. These included mentorship, premarital education, emotional support

networks, and personal spiritual development. Participants with access to these resources reported greater confidence and stronger adherence to Islamic values.

Tenth, Islamophobia emerged as a significant external barrier, fulfilling Objective 10. Participants reported discrimination, fear of public identity, and rejection from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, which affected self-esteem, social participation, and marriage prospects.

Finally, the overall findings confirmed that the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women are interconnected across social, cultural, religious, and institutional domains, addressing Objective 11. The lack of family support, absence of Walī structures, weak community integration, unsafe matchmaking practices, and limited legal awareness collectively contributed to a vulnerable marriage environment.

These findings underscore the urgent need for faith-based guidance, institutional reforms, ethical matchmaking systems, and community education to ensure that reverted Muslim women can pursue marriage with dignity, protection, and confidence, in accordance with Islamic principles.

5.3.3 Contributions of the Study

This study makes several important contributions to the existing body of knowledge on marriage, reversion, and Muslim women's experiences. Firstly, it contributes empirical evidence on a population that is often underrepresented in academic research, namely newly reverted Muslim women seeking marriage. By focusing specifically on this group, the study highlights challenges that are frequently overlooked in mainstream marriage and family studies within Muslim communities.

Secondly, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the intersection between social, cultural, religious, and institutional factors affecting the marriage process for reverted women. Through the integration of quantitative data and qualitative insights, the research demonstrates how issues such as lack of Walī support, limited Islamic guidance, community exclusion, unsafe matchmaking practices, and Islamophobia jointly shape women's experiences. This holistic perspective extends existing literature by showing that marriage

challenges are not isolated problems but interconnected systemic concerns.

Thirdly, the study contributes practically by identifying concrete areas for intervention, including faith-based guidance, mentorship programmes, community reforms, counselling services, and ethical matchmaking systems. The solutions proposed are directly grounded in participants' experiences and Islamic principles, offering a framework that can be adopted by mosques, Islamic centres, community organisations, and policy makers.
Finally, the study contributes to applied Islamic social research by linking empirical findings with Islamic teachings related to marriage, ethics, guardianship, and community responsibility. This integration strengthens the relevance of the research for both academic audiences and Muslim communities, providing guidance that is both evidence-based and religiously grounded.

5.3.4 Limitations of the Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size, although sufficient for exploratory analysis, may not fully represent the diversity of reverted Muslim women across different countries, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. The findings therefore cannot be generalised to all reverted women worldwide, but rather reflect the experiences of the participants included in this study.
Secondly, the study relied on self-reported data collected through surveys and open-ended responses. Such data may be influenced by personal perceptions, emotional states, or reluctance to disclose sensitive experiences. Some participants may have underreported or overreported certain challenges due to fear of judgment, privacy concerns, or social desirability.

Thirdly, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to observe changes over time. Marriage experiences and challenges may evolve as women gain more knowledge, integrate into communities, or enter different life stages. A longitudinal approach could provide deeper insight into how these challenges develop and change over time.
Finally, the study did not include the perspectives of families, community leaders, imams, or potential spouses. Including these voices could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the structural and relational dynamics influencing the marriage process.

5.3.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are recommended. Firstly, future studies may expand the sample size and include participants from a wider range of geographical regions, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural contexts. This would allow for comparative analysis and enhance the generalisability of the findings.

Secondly, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how the marriage experiences of reverted women change over time, particularly before and after marriage. Such research could explore the long-term impact of mentorship, counselling, and community support on marital stability, emotional well-being, and religious development.

Thirdly, future research may include the perspectives of imams, community leaders, mentors, and family members in order to better understand institutional practices, community attitudes, and decision-making processes. This could help identify additional barriers and opportunities for reform within Muslim communities.

In addition, further studies could examine the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as premarital counselling programmes, Walī services, or regulated matchmaking platforms, in improving marriage outcomes for reverted women. Evaluating such initiatives would provide valuable evidence for policy development and community planning.

5.4 Closing Reflection

This study was undertaken to give voice to the experiences of newly reverted Muslim women and highlight the unique challenges they face in seeking marriage. Throughout the research, it became evident that these women often navigate their marriage journey with limited support, significant uncertainty, and emotional vulnerability. Yet, their resilience, faith, and commitment to Islamic values remain steadfast.

The findings of this study reflect not only personal struggles but also broader communal responsibilities. Marriage in Islam is not merely a private matter but a social and spiritual institution that requires guidance, ethical practice, and community support to ensure fairness, protection, and harmony. By examining the experiences of reverted women, the study underscores the importance of structured Walī support, mentorship, accessible Islamic education, and ethical matchmaking practices.

Reflecting on the research process, it is clear that communities, institutions, and families play a critical role in supporting reverted women. Providing safe spaces, emotional guidance, and practical advice aligns with Islamic teachings on justice, compassion, and mutual responsibility. Empowering reverted women with knowledge, mentorship, and community networks not only strengthens their confidence and decision-making but also contributes to healthier, faith-centred marital relationships.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that addressing the challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women requires a holistic and faith-informed approach, integrating individual support, community engagement, and institutional accountability. By doing so, Muslim communities can ensure that reverted women are protected, guided, and empowered to pursue marriage in accordance with Islamic principles, ultimately fostering justice, dignity, and wellbeing for all parties involved.

5.5 Overall Thesis Summary

This thesis examined the complex challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women in seeking Sharia-compliant marriage and explored practical solutions grounded in Islamic principles, community responsibility, and institutional support. The primary aim of the study was to investigate the social, religious, cultural, and structural barriers affecting reverted women during the marriage process and to propose recommendations that may improve their protection, well-being, and marital outcomes.

The study was guided by a set of clearly defined research objectives that focused on identifying the major difficulties experienced by reverted women, examining the role of family and community support, assessing the availability of Islamic guidance and institutional assistance, and exploring the effectiveness of existing matchmaking practices. Through this framework, the research sought to provide both empirical evidence and faith-based guidance to address a critical but under-researched issue within contemporary Muslim societies.

A mixed-methods research design was employed to capture both the measurable patterns and

the lived experiences of the participants. Quantitative data were collected through structured survey questions, which provided information on demographic characteristics, educational background, marital history, sources of support, and institutional access. Qualitative data were obtained through open-ended questions that allowed participants to describe their experiences, challenges, fears, and recommendations in their own words. This combination enabled a comprehensive analysis of both statistical trends and personal narratives.

The findings revealed that newly reverted Muslim women face multiple and interconnected challenges throughout the marriage process. One of the most significant barriers identified was the absence of family advocacy and Walī support, which left many women without proper guidance, protection, or representation in marriage negotiations. This lack of guardianship increased vulnerability to unsafe proposals, emotional pressure, and uninformed decision-making. Many participants also reported limited access to reliable Islamic guidance, which affected their understanding of marriage procedures, rights, and responsibilities under Sharia.

Cultural and social factors were found to play a substantial role in shaping marriage opportunities. Preferences for same-ethnic marriages, traditional expectations regarding gender roles, and concerns about cultural compatibility often restricted the options available to reverted women. In addition, social stigma, Islamophobia, and negative assumptions about converts contributed to feelings of exclusion and insecurity. These factors frequently limited women’s integration into Muslim networks and reduced their ability to form meaningful and supportive connections within the community.

Economic and practical considerations further influenced marriage outcomes. Expectations related to financial stability, housing arrangements, and dowry placed additional pressure on both the women and potential spouses. Limited access to community centres, marriage services, and trusted mediators reduced opportunities for safe introductions and ethical matchmaking. Although some participants used online marriage platforms, these were often perceived as unreliable, poorly regulated, and lacking adequate safeguards, thereby exposing women to risks of deception and exploitation.

The study also highlighted the importance of social capital and community integration.

Participants who lacked strong ties to Muslim communities or mentorship networks reported higher levels of emotional stress, loneliness, and vulnerability. In contrast, those with access to knowledgeable mentors, supportive peers, and Islamic learning environments demonstrated greater confidence, stronger religious understanding, and improved decision-making abilities. Legal and marital status issues further complicated the process for some participants, particularly those navigating previous non-Islamic marriages or complex legal arrangements.

Based on these findings, the study proposed a set of integrated solutions and recommendations aimed at improving marriage processes for reverted Muslim women. These included strengthening institutional Walī support, establishing structured mentorship programmes, expanding premarital counselling services, developing ethical and supervised matchmaking platforms, and increasing community awareness regarding the rights and protection of reverted women. Emphasis was placed on aligning these measures with Islamic teachings related to justice, responsibility, sincerity, and compassion.

An action-oriented framework was developed to guide Islamic institutions, community organisations, and policymakers in implementing practical interventions. This framework emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts between religious authorities, educators, counsellors, and community leaders to ensure that reverted women receive adequate guidance, protection, and emotional support throughout the marriage process. By combining faith-based principles with institutional reform, the study sought to offer sustainable and culturally sensitive solutions.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates that the marriage challenges faced by newly reverted Muslim women are not isolated individual difficulties but systemic issues rooted in gaps in guardianship, guidance, community support, and ethical practice. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates family involvement, institutional accountability, religious education, and community engagement. Through strengthened support structures and faith-centred interventions, Muslim communities can create safer marriage environments, more just, and more inclusive for reverted women.

This research contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the unique vulnerabilities

of reverted Muslim women and by offering empirically grounded, Islamically informed recommendations for improving marriage processes. It also provides a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at promoting ethical marriage practices and safeguarding the dignity and well-being of reverted women within Muslim societies.

Glossary

Al-Ḥashr (الحشر) – A chapter (Surah) in the Qur'an; often referenced in Islamic literature for its guidance on social justice, community responsibilities, and ethical conduct.

Al-ʾĀdāb (الأداب) – Etiquette, manners, or moral conduct in Islam; relevant in family, community, and marital interactions.

Amānah (أمانة) – Trust; in the context of marriage, it refers to the sacred responsibility spouses have toward each other, including ethical conduct, protection, guidance, and mutual care.

An-Naḥl (النحل) – A chapter (Surah) of the Qur'an meaning "The Bee"; addresses themes of gratitude, divine blessings, moral guidance, and social responsibility, often cited in discussions on faith, ethics, and human conduct.

At-Tirmidhī – A major Hadith collection compiled by Imam al-Tirmidhī, containing sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), often used in Islamic jurisprudence and ethics.

Deen (دين) – Religion or faith; in marriage, the prophetic teaching that marriage fulfills half of one's deen emphasizes its spiritual, moral, and social significance.

Exploitation in Marriage – Abuse, manipulation, or unethical treatment by a spouse that violates the rights and dignity of a married partner.

Fitnah (فتنة) – Trial or temptation; can refer to social, emotional, or moral challenges, including those that may affect a person's marital life.

Hadith (حديث) – The sayings, actions, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used as guidance in Islamic law, ethics, and daily life.

Hijab (حجاب) – Modest dress and behaviour; includes principles of modesty for both men and women in Islam, relevant in the context of marriage and social interactions.

ʿIddah (العدة) – The waiting period a woman observes after the death of her husband or after a divorce, before she can remarry, as prescribed in Sharia.

Islamophobia – Prejudice, fear, or discrimination against Muslims based on their religious identity.

Istiḥālah (استحالة) – Transformation or change; in research, can refer to changes in social behavior or perspectives, e.g., family attitudes toward reverted Muslims.

Jahiliyya (جاهلية) – Ignorance or pre-Islamic practices; can describe societal misconceptions that create challenges for reverted Muslims.

Kafā'ah (كفاية) – Compatibility or equality in marriage; a principle used to assess suitability of spouses in Islam, including religion, character, and social background.

Mahr (مهر) – Mandatory dower or gift given by the husband to the wife at the time of Nikāḥ; a symbol of respect and security.

Muhājirūn (المهاجرون) – The early Muslims who migrated from Makkah to Madinah in the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), exemplifying commitment, sacrifice, and faith.

Muslim Revert – A person who has embraced Islam, returning to the faith of their innate disposition (fitrah).

Nikāḥ (نكاح) – Islamic marriage contract; a legal and spiritual bond between a man and woman in accordance with Islamic law.

Quantitative Research – Research that uses numerical data, statistics, and measurable outcomes, often used to show prevalence or patterns, e.g., number of reverted women facing

challenges in marriage.

Qualitative Research – Research that explores experiences, perceptions, and motivations, often using open-ended survey responses to provide context to quantitative data.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (صحيح البخاري) – One of the most authentic collections of Hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari. It contains verified sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and includes guidance on all aspects of life, including marriage, ethics, and social conduct. Example: "When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of his religion; so, let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5066).

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (صحيح مسلم) – Another highly authentic Hadith collection compiled by Imam Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. It is a key reference for Islamic teachings and includes guidance on marriage, morality, and social responsibilities.

Shariah (شريعة) – Islamic law derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and scholarly consensus; governs all aspects of life including marriage, rights, and responsibilities.

Shayṭān (شيطان) – Satan; the enemy of humankind who incites wrongdoing, temptation, and moral deviation, including in matters of marriage and relationships.

Social Stigma – Negative societal attitudes or prejudices that impact an individual's social or marital life, often affecting reverted Muslim women.

Spouse – A husband or wife; in Islamic context, the partner in a lawful Nikāḥ with whom one shares rights, responsibilities, and mutual respect.

Sakīnah (سكينة) – Tranquility or peace; in marriage, refers to the spiritual and emotional comfort that spouses bring to each other (Qur'an 30:21).

Tranquillity in Marriage – Emotional and spiritual peace found between spouses, as emphasized in Qur'an 30:21.

Walī (ولي) – Guardian; typically, a father or male relative responsible for representing a woman in marriage to ensure her rights and protection.

Zinā (زنا) – Unlawful sexual relations outside of marriage; prohibited in Islam and considered a major sin.

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Holy Qur'an Index

Sūrah (Chapter) Verse(s)	Verses (English meaning – brief)	Subject / Context in Thesis
Al-Rūm 30:21	"And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you love and mercy."	Foundation of marriage in Islam; love, mercy, and emotional stability in marital life.
An-Naḥl 16:125	"Invite them to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction"	To ask the old reverted Muslims women to guide newly reverted Muslim women, as they have gone through the same thing earlier themselves and can understand their problem better than anyone else can, as a family, as a parent.
Al-Isra 17:32	"And do not approach Zinā. Indeed, it is an immorality and an evil way"	To avoid talking with men alone for marriage. To protect chastity and avoid pathways leading to immorality.
At-Tawbah 9:40	"Do not grieve; Indeed, Allah is with us".	When Alone and isolated, turn to Allah.

Al-Ḥashr 59:9	“They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”	To help each other and not look down upon them.
Ar-Rum 30:30	“So, direct your face [i.e., self] toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiṭrah”	The natural disposition Allah has placed in every human being. Everyone is born as a Muslim.
Ar-Rum 30:21	“Marriage in Islam is intended to provide emotional security and mutual care, which is particularly important for reverted women who often lack family support and guidance during the marriage process.”	Strengthening Islamic understanding about the true purpose of marriage can help protect reverted women from harmful experiences and unrealistic expectations.
Al-Hujrat 49:13	“We created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.”	To establish that no human is better than another except through taqwā (piety)
An-Nisa 4:19	“And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good”	These teachings support the need for ethical practices, sincere intentions, and protective measures for reverted women who may not have a traditional Walī or family support.
Al-Qasas 28:56	“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love, but Allāh guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are guided.”	To thank Allah for guiding us to the correct path.

Hadith Index:

Source/ Hadīth Number	Reference:	Key Theme or Usage
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5090	A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So, you should marry a religious woman otherwise, you will be a loser.	A person should be chosen for marriage primarily based on religious commitment and character.
At-Tirmidhī 39	"No man is alone with a woman except that the third of them is Shayṭān"	Prophetic guidance further reinforces protective boundaries.
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6138	"And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should unite the bond of kinship (i.e. keep good relation with his kith and kin)."	They preserve family bonds, provide reliable support and references, and play an important role in matters such as marriage and character verification, one should be kind to them.

Verse Index

Arabic Text	Transliteration	Translation Summary
وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ 30:21	Wa min āyātihi an khalaqa lakum min anfusikum azwājan litaskunū ilayhā wa ja‘ala baynakum mawaddatan wa raḥmah, inna fī dhālika la’āyātin liqawmin yatafakkarūn.	And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.
ادْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ 16:125	Ud‘u ilā sabīli rabbika bil-ḥikmati wal-maw‘iẓatil-ḥasanah wa jādilhum billatī hiya aḥsan.	“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner.”
وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَا ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا 17:32	Wa lā taqrabū az-zinā, innahu kāna fāḥishatan wa sā’a sabīlā.	“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is an immorality and an evil way.”
لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا 9:40	Lā taḥzan innallāha ma‘anā.	“Do not grieve; indeed, Allah is with us.”

وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ 59:9	Wa yu'thirūna 'alā anfusihim walaw kāna bihim khaṣāṣah, wa man yūqa shuḥḥa nafsihī fa-ulā'ika humul-mufliḥūn	"And they give preference over themselves, even though they are in need. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be successful."
فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ 30:30	Fa-aqim wajhaka lild-dīni ḥanīfā, fiṭratallāhi allatī faṭara an-nāsa 'alayhā, lā tabdīla likhalqillāh, dhālika ad-dīnul-qayyim.	"So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. The fitrah of Allah upon which He has created mankind. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion."
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ 49:13	Yā ayyuhan-nāsu innā khalaqnākum min dhakarin wa unthā wa ja'alnākum shu'ūban wa qabā'ila lita'ārafū, inna akramakum 'indallāhi atqākum.	"O mankind, indeed We created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."
وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا 4:19	Wa 'āshirūhunna bil-ma'rūf, fa-in karihtumūhunna fa'asā an takrahū shay'an wa yaj'alallāhu fīhi khayran kathīrā.	"And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good."

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ 28:56	Innaka lā tahdī man aḥbabta wa lākinna Allāha yahdī man yashā’, wa huwa a‘lamu bil-muhtadīn.	“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are guided.”

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Appendices

Appendix A - Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire:

Topic: Challenges Faced by Muslim Female Reverts When Seeking Marriage and Suggested Solutions

Section A: Personal Information

1. Age

[Open text field]

2. Gender

☐ Female

☐ Other

3. Marital Status

☐ Unmarried

☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

4. Educational Qualification

☐ Secondary

☐ Higher Secondary

☐ Graduate

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Other

5. Occupation

[Open text field]

Section B: Challenges Faced by Reverts in Seeking Marriage

6. What are the main challenges that you think Muslim female reverts face when seeking marriage? (You can choose more than one.)

☐ Lack of family support

☐ Social stigma or discrimination

☐ Difficulty in finding a suitable partner

☐ Pressure to marry within a specific cultural or ethnic group

☐ Lack of understanding of Islamic marriage rights and responsibilities

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section C: Impacts of These Challenges

7. In your opinion, what are the negative impacts of these challenges on Muslim female reverts?

☐ Mental health issues (stress, anxiety, depression)

☐ Isolation from the Muslim community

☐ Strain in family relationships

☐ Difficulty in adapting to married life

☐ Other: _____

Section D: Solutions and Support

8. What solutions do you think could help Muslim female reverts overcome these challenges in seeking marriage?

☐ Providing family counseling and support

☐ Community awareness and education on the challenges faced by reverts

☐ Islamic premarital counseling

☐ Encouraging inclusive and open-minded matchmaking within the community

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section E: Suggestions for Improvement

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the marriage process for Muslim female reverts?

[Open text field]

Appendix B - Consent:

International Open University

Department of Islamic Studies

Research Ethics Application, Participant Consent Form

Title of the Research:

Challenges Faced by Muslim Female Reverts When Seeking Marriage and Suggested Solutions

Researcher: Sahar Qureshi

Student ID: ST10147601

Supervisor: Prof. Raufu Oyedapo

Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by Muslim female reverts when seeking marriage and to provide practical and Islamic-based solutions to address these challenges.

• You will be asked to answer some questions either through a questionnaire or an interview.

• The session will take around 20–30 minutes for interviews and less than 5 minutes for questionnaires.

Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research and understand that I will receive no compensation for my participation.

Participant's Name (optional): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(For online survey: This will be a required checkbox on the first page. For interviews: Participants can reply via message, "I have read the information and consent to participate.")

Appendix C: Ethics Approval



INTERNATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

Directorate of Research and Publications

Ref. No. ETHICS/006/05-25

Date: 10/05/2025

To,

Sahar Qureshi
Student ID: ST10147601
Program: Master's in Islamic Studies
Contact Email: qureshi123sahar@gmail.com

Subject: Ethical Approval

Dear Sahar Qureshi,

With reference to your application dated 19/4/2025 regarding the Ethical Approval of your research proposal, I am pleased to inform you that our International Open University Board of Research and Publications (IOUBRP) is satisfied with the documents you submitted. After a critical evaluation of your papers, the IOUBRP has decided to accept your research topic entitled "Challenges faced by Muslims Females Reverts When Seeking Marriage and suggested Solution," along with your proposal.

Therefore, you are permitted to conduct the research according to your proposal and submit the report on time as well.

Barak Allahu Feek!

Prof. Dr. Afroza Bulbul
Chairman, Board of Research and Publications
International Open University

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Appendix D: Glossary of Arabic Terms

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Definition / Explanation
الحشر	Al-Ḥashr	A chapter (Surah) in the Qur'an addressing social justice, community responsibility, and ethical conduct.
الآداب	Al-ʾĀdāb	Islamic moral conduct or proper behaviour in family, society, and marriage.
نكاح	Nikāḥ	Islamic legal and spiritual bond between a man and a woman under Sharia
أمانة	Amānah	Sacred responsibility or duty, e.g., spouses' obligations to care, protect, and act ethically toward each other.
النحل	Naḥl	A Qur'anic chapter highlighting gratitude, divine blessings, moral guidance, and social responsibility.
الترمذي	At-Tirmidhī	A major Hadith collection compiling sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, used for jurisprudence and ethics.
دين	Deen	Spiritual and moral guidance; in marriage, fulfilling half of one's religion.

فتنة	Fitnah	Social, emotional, or moral challenges that test faith or conduct, including in marriage.
حديث	Hadith	Reports of the Prophet's peace and blessings be upon him sayings, actions, and approvals, guiding Islamic law and life.
حجاب	Hijab	Islamic principles of modesty in dress and behaviour, relevant in marriage and social interaction.
العدة	'Idda	The prescribed period a woman observes after divorce or widowhood before remarrying.
استحالة	Istiḥālah	Pre-Islamic ignorance or societal misconceptions, often creating social challenges.
كفاية	Kafā'ah	Principle assessing suitability of spouses, considering religion, character, and social background.
مهر	Mahr	Mandatory gift from husband to wife at Nikāḥ symbolizing respect and security.
نكاح	Nikāḥ	Islamic legal and spiritual bond between a man and a woman under Sharia.

صحيح البخاري	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī	Highly authentic Hadith collection of Prophet's Peace and blessings be upon him sayings and actions; includes marital guidance.
صحيح مسلم	صحيح مسلم	Another highly authentic Hadith collection, providing guidance on ethics, marriage, and social responsibilities.
شريعة	Shariah	Laws derived from Qur'an, Sunnah, and consensus governing all aspects of life, including marriage.
شيطان	Shayṭān	Enemy of humankind who incites sin, temptation, and moral deviation, including in marital life.
زوج / زوجة	Zawj / Zawjah	Husband or wife; partner in a lawful Nikāḥ sharing rights, duties, and mutual respect.
سكينة	Sakīnah	Spiritual and emotional comfort in marriage; Qur'an 30:21 emphasizes it as divine blessing.
ولي	Walī	Male relative (usually father) ensuring a woman's rights and protection in marriage.
زنا	Zinā	Sexual relations outside marriage; prohibited in Islam and considered a major sin.

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