



Research on Child Marriages Facts, Causes & Consequences

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ABSTRACT

The evil of child marriages was much more in ancient India than in modern India. Poor people had this custom in common to the rich people. This tradition was brought in India in the mediaeval age by the Mughal emperors who ruled over India a longer period. The cruel Muslim Jagirdars had bad intention against the Hindu girls & the parents of the girls were forced to marry before the matured age. This saved the honor of the parents & safety of their female children. Even when the mothers were pregnant the parents would promise to other families that they would marry their child in their family.

KEYWORDS

Marriage, Evils, Poverty, discrimination, domestic violence

Introduction:

The brides were younger than the grooms. The parents would prefer to marry their children to the families known to them. They would also prefer the cast & the position, even their friends & known people. There were many disadvantages of child marriages. In many cases the wives were beaten & oppressed by their husbands. The cause was that husbands were older & stronger. At last in 1927, the government made a law that the minimum age of a girl for the marriage should be 12 years.

Then after Independence the child marriage was abolished & made illegal. Even at present the minimum age required for marriage for a girl is 18 years & for men is 21 years. Even after this law was enforced people mostly in rural areas made child marriages illegally. India is a vast country where it is very difficult to trace & check out the child marriages. Even now, child marriages take place in villages of Rajasthan & backward states.

The NGO's & social organizations visit such villages & persuade the people to abolish child marriages. For this spread of education is a must. Some short films, plays & documentaries can be shown in rural & backward areas to point out the evils & dark future of child marriages. The laws should be severe & implemented by the government to abolish this evil.

Of course, the task is tough but not impossible. The young college students should personally visit the others of children & convince them that the future of their child is dark if they force the evil of child marriage. This is very important in the development of our nation.

The government should take strict actions in such areas & the families where child marriages take place should be dealt with strictness. The sooner the child marriages are abolished, the better for the whole country. Of course the percentage of child marriages has gone down for the past few years but still this evil exists. Let all the country-men join hands to abolish child marriages & make India better & advanced country.

Cause of child marriages:

There are many causes of child marriages. The few of them are:

• Poverty:

Parents desire to prevent sexual relation before marriage, the fear of rape, lack of educational or employment chance for girls & the traditions of women.

In many countries in the middle east poverty is one of the

main causes of early marriage. In south Asia & some parts of Africa, poverty compels families to give their daughters in marriage considering poor families financial conditions & their honor. Some people accept child marriages for want of money or save money. While some prefer higher socio - economic class.

• Protecting the girl child's sexuality:

In some cultures child marriage is seen as a way to protect the families honor. Sometimes some sexual crimes take place & the girls have to sacrifice their life. Here the honor of family is given more importance.

• Gender discrimination:

Child marriage is the most severe form of gender discrimination. Means devaluing of women & the girl child. This deprives women & girls of many things like education, information, food & health care.

Throughout the world, families & societies treat girls & boys differently, with girls facing many problems. Gender discrimination underpins many laws that parent's women access to land, & many other economic resources. It places women in an inferior position & the hold of parents & family continues.

• Inadequate implementation of the law:

Weak laws & their insufficient implementation results in child marriages. Violence against women in some countries is favored by male authority.

• Consequences of child marriages:

Child marriages are the result of poverty & powerlessness which affects the physical, mental, intellectual & social development of the girl child. It is to oppress the women & their families & at last the girl child is married to an older male.

• Domestic violence:

After child marriages the young girls who are very young than their husbands come in new homes. They have greater responsibilities without much discretion or decision making power. Economically they are dependent. They lack social support & suffer violence. Sometimes some accidents also occur & a child bride can lose her life.

• Education:

After deep study it has been found that early marriage disturbs the education of brides. The girls are restricted to their homes. Due to domestic responsibilities child bearing & some social limitations their education suffers. The parents & in-laws are no more interested in bride education. The chances of em-

ployment are also rare. Besides early widowhood, divorce & abandonment prove fatal in some cases.

In African countries, it was found that the girls more than 60% were married off before the age of 18. While in Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Indonesia & Thailand education of young women has been important factor in increasing the age of marriage.

Recommendations for law & policy reforms:

Child marriages should be treated as crimes. The laws should be implemented strictly. The minimum age for the marriage is 18 & 21 should be observed strictly. The rights of young women civil, social, political, economical & cultural should be recognized & honored in public. This has been recommended both by the CEDAW committee in its general recommendation 21 & the UN special report on violence against women.

Render child marriage null & void:

1. Sale of children for the purpose of marriage should be made null & void.
2. All marriages which are made null & void should allow the girl to retain all properties like the marriage was valid.

Penalties & Remedies must be established:

- Punishments should be for the responsible persons & those who registered the child marriage.
- Strict criminal & civil penalties to the persons who arrange or participate both the bride's or groom's parents.
- NGO's should be recognized parties to the complaint.
- The punishments should include fines & imprisonment.
- The public servants should not attend such marriages.
- Provide alternatives for communities that traditionally opt for child marriage.
- Establish scholarships for girls in at risk communities.

Commit government Donor and NGO support to combat child marriage.

- Help and encourage young couples be delay child birth.
- Opportunities should be given to girls to continue their education or earn money as another stagy for delaying marriage as well as expanding life skills and choices.
- Providing some sources to earn living.
- A commitment that the girls would remain unmarried up to some standards or examinations in particular areas.
- Some incentives should be given to women who have obtained some level of schooling.
- A treatment fund should be set up for the victims of child marriages .it should be used for education and other pour pauses.
- Awareness should be brought among women to oppose against violence for them. This can be discussed during school hours and teaching.
- Problems should be discussed arising from poverty, cast of the child marriage with the give students.
- Support the school programmes which oppose early marriages.
- Donors, government, efforts and positives opportunities for girls education should be encouraged.

All the above programmes and the opportunities should be implemented among the families and communities where child marriage is most prevent.

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