



A Study on Consequences Child Marriage and its Legal Protection in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh is a developing country of South Asia. The population of the country is 170 million. Bangladesh is doing better in different sectors like economy, infrastructures, different mega projects etc. Bangladesh has achieved the targets of Millennium Development Goals and working tremendously to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. These activities have become possible due to the prudential leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. But in case of child marriage the country is not achieving the targets because Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country. Many people love different rules and regulations of Islam. However the present study has conducted to explore the consequences of child marriage in Bangladesh. The study was conducted at urban and rural areas of Dhaka division and Barishal division in Bangladesh. Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh. All types of women are present at Dhaka city in Bangladesh. The study was documentary analysis type. Data and information were collected from secondary sources. Data and information were collected from books, research reports, journals, magazines and daily newspaper, internet, different websites of government and non government organizations etc. From the result it was found that in some cases due to child marriage child marriage may result in a wide range of consequences for women such as denial of education, domestic violence and abuse, lower labour force participation rates, perpetuation of gender inequality, higher prevalence of divorce, abandonment, and separation, perpetuation of poverty, poor quality of marital life, and facilitating sexual exploitation. The study revealed that child marriage and early pregnancy, partly because girls are pressured to prove their fertility soon after marrying and have little access to information on reproductive health. These women are less able to carry their pregnancy to term. Girls who marry and give birth before their bodies are fully developed are more at risk of death, injury, and illness in childbirth. Parents may not be able to afford to maintain their daughters' educational expenditures, and husbands prefer not to send girls to school so that they can have superiority and full control over their wives. Girls may be denied education as investment in education for young girls may be seen as a waste of money since they will work in another household after marriage. So if child marriages occur, the child should be given proper mental support, should educate sexual and health related education. The husband should continue the education of the girl and should provide all type of facilities to the girl. Husband should not abuse wives and should not perform domestic violence. Husband should not create any situation so that the wife takes divorce.

Key words: *Child marriage, Education, Health education, Child mortality, Consequences, Poverty, Gender Inequality, Domestic Violence, Abuse, Divorce.*

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is known for its high prevalence of child marriage: Over 52% of children are married before reaching 18 (Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle, & Lee-Rife, 2011; Lee-Rife, Malhotra, Warner, & Glinski, 2012; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2016). However, Streatfield, Kamal, Ahsan, and Nahar (2015) showed that the marriage of children in Bangladesh might not occur as early as it appears because more than half of the female respondents in Bangladesh misreport their age during surveys, which creates an artificial inflation of the incidence of child marriage in Bangladesh. That leads to an important question: will the socioeconomic factors responsible for child marriage have a similar effect when the age is adjusted? We propose to address the question by analyzing the latest four nationwide Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS) from 2004 to 2014. Children are the weakest and most unprotected segment of the society. They are dependent upon parents and others for growing up. They need the support of the family, community and the state as a whole. In Bangladesh, a large number of children are deprived of their basic

human rights due to unacceptable health, nutrition and education as well as social conditions. In addition, child marriage represents a major threat to children well being in Bangladesh. At present, early marriage is one of the important demographic determinates of girl child in Bangladesh (Badrud, 1990). Parents encourage marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hope that this marriage will benefit them both financially and socially. Young girls are often regarded as an economic burden to their families; marrying them off at a very early age is seen as reducing the financial burden of the family. Parents encourage early marriage with a fear that their dowry price will increase as their daughters' age. Apart from these, poverty is one of the most frequently cited factors behind child marriage in rural Bangladesh.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is as follows:

1. To explore the consequences of child marriage in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at urban and rural areas of Dhaka division and Barishal division in Bangladesh. Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh. All types of women are present at Dhaka city in Bangladesh. The study was documentary analysis type. Data and information were collected from secondary sources. Data and information were collected from books, research reports, journals, magazines and daily newspaper, internet, different websites of government and non government organizations etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Consequences of Child Marriage in Bangladesh

Child marriage may result in a wide range of consequences for women such as denial of education, domestic violence and abuse, lower labour force participation rates, perpetuation of gender inequality, higher prevalence of divorce, abandonment, and separation, perpetuation of poverty, poor quality of marital life, and facilitating sexual exploitation. Hence UNFPA (2012:4) argue that “child marriage robs girls of their girlhood, entrenching them and their future families in poverty, limiting their life choices, and generating high development costs for communities.” Bangladesh's high rate of child marriage compared to other South Asian countries has at least four adverse consequences according to one study. These include: early age at child birth and adverse health consequences both for mother and child, denial of education, violation of human rights, and unequal gender relations (Jones, 2010).

1. Fertility Related Consequences

Earlier studies show a strong association between child marriage and early pregnancy, partly because girls are pressured to prove their fertility soon after marrying and have little access to information on reproductive health. These women are less able to carry their pregnancy to term (Doskoch, 2013; Kamal and Hassan, 2013). Using DHS data from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, Doskoch (2013) observes that child marriage is associated with unintended pregnancy, low levels of contraceptive use, and limited use of maternal health services. In at least three of the countries, and sometimes in all four, women who had married before age 18 were more likely than those who had married later to have had an unintended pregnancy, to have had multiple unintended pregnancies, and to have not used contraceptives before their first live birth.

2. Limited Role in Contraceptive Decision Making

Women who marry as children are less likely to use contraception as women married late are more likely to have knowledge of contraception as a result of having had a higher education (Sarkar 2009). Similarly, Doskoch's 2013 study referenced above shows that child marriage is correlated with low levels of contraceptive use and limited use of maternal health services in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

3. Higher Rate of Child Mortality

Child marriage induced adolescent pregnancy increases the risk of child mortality. A UNICEF report shows that if a mother is under the age of 18 years, her baby's chance of dying in the first year of life is 60 percent higher than that of a baby born to a mother older than 19 years (UNICEF, 2007). Update in addition, the Bangladesh Maternal Mortality and Health Care Survey 2010 reported that neonatal, infant and under-five mortality rates are higher among the adolescent mothers than the mothers whose age is 20-29 years

(NIPORT, Measure Evaluation, and icddr,b, 2012). The chance of low birth weight infants is also higher among the adolescent mothers which are an important contributing factor to higher neonatal mortality rates.

4. Higher Rate of Maternal Mortality and Other Health Consequences

Girls who marry and give birth before their bodies are fully developed are more at risk of death, injury, and illness in childbirth. In 2007, UNICEF reported that a girl under the age of 15 is five times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than a woman in her 20s (UNICEF, 2007). According to Ali (2013), the families of child brides are not only unaware that partaking in the harmful tradition will lead to poverty, but they are also in the dark about the potential harm to a child bride's health. The girls that are pressured and forced into child marriage are sometimes very young and are almost always not physically, sexually, or mentally prepared for the responsibilities a marriage brings. A newlywed bride is pressured to have sex and bear children immediately after the wedding ceremony regardless of her physical maturity (Ali 2013). Girl children who marry young are subject to severe health problems associated with pregnancy and childbirth (Jain et al., 2011; Nguyen and Wodon 2012; Birech 2013). Child marriage is associated with maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, and other harmful consequences (UNICEF, 2001; ICRW, 2007). The sexual and reproductive health of married girls is significantly poorer than that of their unmarried counterparts. Girls and women who marry early and with little or no schooling often have limited awareness of their rights and lack the knowledge and confidence to negotiate safer sex, including condom use. Young married girls are more likely to contract HIV than their unmarried counterparts as a result of their heightened sexual exposure, often with an older spouse who by virtue of age is more at risk of being HIV positive (Myers and Harvey, 2011). ICRW's 2007 report, 'Child Marriage in Southern Asia,' shows that girls married as adolescents are often forced into early childbearing, which has long been a risk to young mothers; it often leads to debilitating injuries, infant death, malnutrition and even maternal death. Girls married at young ages are more likely to experience multiple pregnancies, recurrent miscarriage and termination of pregnancy, and pregnancy and delivery related complications. They are also more likely than women married at older ages to be malnourished, suffer frailties, be unable to achieve healthy pregnancies, be unable to look after their children and family because of poor physical and mental health, and be susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases, fistula, and poor sexual health. The majority of young brides have limited access to contraception and reproductive health services and information. They are exposed to early and frequent sexual relations and to repeated pregnancies and childbirth before they are physically mature and psychologically ready. Obstetric fistula is one of the most devastating consequences, affecting over two million girls and young women globally (UNFPA, 2012).

5. Denial of Education

Denial of education is one of the major socioeconomic consequences of child marriage in Bangladesh (Field and Ambrus, 2008; Jones, 2010; Jain et al., 2011; Lee-Rife et al., 2012). Girls may be denied education as investment in education for young girls may be seen as a waste of money since they will work in another household after marriage (UNICEF 2001). Another path towards lower educational attainment is that burdens such as early childbearing and household chores are imposed upon girls, making attending school difficult (Frances and Black, 2000). Parents may not be able to afford to maintain their daughters' educational expenditures, and husbands prefer not to send girls to school so that they can have superiority and full control over their wives. A study in Bangladesh by Human Rights Watch (2015) showed that for girls who were still studying at the time of their engagement or marriage, child marriage ended their studies in all but a few cases. Even families who wished to support their daughters' education after their marriages were largely unable to do so.

Field and Ambrus (2008), using data from rural Bangladesh, explore the hypothesis that women attain less schooling as a result of social and financial pressure to marry young. They found that each additional year that marriage was delayed was associated with 0.22 additional years of schooling and 5.6 percent higher literacy. Ferdousi (2013) shows that child marriage is repeatedly cited as a significant factor impeding the realization of the right to education. With child marriage, many girls drop out of school. Child marriage often results in rights to education being taken away, which undermines girls' self-confidence and decision-making power, and denies them the opportunity to become economically independent. Girls who marry as adolescents attend fewer years of school and have lower social status in their husbands' families. These consequences are exacerbated by the fact that the children of young and illiterate mothers tend to face the same cycle of childhood deprivation and damage experienced by their mothers. Similar findings are found in Jain et al. (2011) and UNICEF (2001).

6. Lower Rate of Labour Force Participation

Child marriage leads to lower participation of young girls in the labour market as most men hold the patriarchal beliefs that engaging female in labour force is a 'necessary evil' as it negatively affects household honour and prestige and threatens masculinity (Banks, 2013). Women likely also have lower labour force participation due to lack of higher education. Because of child marriage, young girls experience early pregnancy and many health complications, which also work as a deterrent to employment (Plan International Bangladesh, 2013; Haque et al., 2014).

7. Higher Rate of Gender Inequality

Child marriage also leads to higher rate of gender inequality in our society. Women married as children have limited roles in family decision-making processes. Because of lower educational attainment and lower rate of labour force participation, women married as children are disadvantaged in terms of taking decision about education and health care of their own and their children. This is also true in the case of household purchases. On the other hand, women married as adults are in a better position to play a role in decision making with their husbands. Surveys that attempt to disentangle household decision making show that women who were married as children are less likely to have joint or individual decision-making power over household purchases or visiting friends and relatives. Women autonomy is poor in child marriage respondents because the rate of husbands' taking decisions alone is high compared to adult-married women (Bhattacharjee and Das, 2011; USAID, 2012; Plan International Bangladesh, 2013; Haque et al., 2014).

8. Perpetuation of Poverty

The occurrence of child marriage leads to continuation of poverty in the lives of millions of women. In most cases, young girls cannot continue their education due to child marriage. Early exit from education is associated with high rates of unemployment among married women and a lower chance of developing skills for participating in income-generating activities. Consequently, girls married as children cannot play a crucial role in their household maintenance and fall in the poverty trap throughout their life span (UNICEF 2007; USAID, 2012).

9. Domestic Violence, Abuse, and Quality of Marital Life

Another negative outcome of child marriage in Bangladesh is the higher incidence of domestic violence. Domestic violence may include beating, torture, humiliation, rape, abuse, and even murder in some cases. Earlier research shows that cultural factors also contribute to higher rates of domestic violence in Bangladesh. For example, wife beating and suffering from domestic violence are considered acceptable by many younger females who were married early in Bangladesh. In addition, domestic violence is not socially recognized as a crime, which further intensified the suffering of young females and thus continues as a significant threat to their security (Kabir, 1999).

A report by World Vision UK (2013), 'Exploring early marriage in fragile states,' shows that women who marry young are more likely to be beaten or threatened, and are more likely to believe that their husbands might be justified in beating or raping them. For that reason, sexual and gender-based violence is higher among this group. Abuse is a daily reality for many married girls; women who marry younger are more likely to be beaten or threatened and to believe that a husband might be justified in beating his wife (Myers and Harvey, 2011). Violence is a major consequence of child marriage in South Asia where married adolescents are highly vulnerable to abuse including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence (UNICEF, 2005; IPPF, 2006; ICRW, 2007; Levine et al., 2009; World Vision, 2013). In India, young women who married before age 18 are twice as likely to report being beaten, slapped or threatened by their husbands than girls who married later. Also, they are three times as likely to report having been forced to have sex without their consent in the previous six months (ICRW, 2007). Recent research in Bangladesh reveals that girls regularly face domestic violence if they fail to meet household and sexual demands and expectations from husband and family members (Johnston and Naved, 2008; Das et al., 2016; Hossain, 2016).

10. Higher Prevalence of Divorce, Abandonment, and Separation

Divorce and subsequent remarriage occur at higher rates in rural areas than in urban areas. Dowry is often cited as cause of divorce. One potential explanation is that women married as children cannot resist the continuous demand for dowry from their husband, which leads to divorce (Ahmed and Naher, 1987; Sarkar,

2009). Amin et al., (2006) adds that girls from poor families have fewer suitors and are more likely to agree to hasty proposals that result in mismatches and bad marriages. Abuse, polygamy, divorce, and widowhood are common among poor married girls, especially those from female-headed households.

11. Psychological Consequences

Le Strat et al (2011) find that child marriage is associated with a broad range of psychiatric disorders. These associations seem to be independent of socio-demographic factors, because the magnitude and significance of the associations remains almost unchanged when controlling for those factors or were significant only with controlling for them. In the context of child marriage, psychological and emotional stress are linked to forced sexual relations and denial of freedom and personal development as household chores now become a priority (Jain et al., 2011). Early-married girls are at higher risk of psychological disorders as these girls will be denied the right to freely express their views and the right to be defended against harmful traditional practices that in turn increase risk of lifetime and recurrent psychiatric disorders. The overall lifetime and 12-month rates of psychiatric disorders are higher for women who married as children (before the age of 18 years), compared with women who married as adults (Ahmed et al., 2013). Jain et al., (2011) argue that mental and emotional stress in girl brides was high because they are not old enough or mature enough to cope with maternal, marital, or in-law issues.

B. Legal and Policy Framework

Bangladesh has a pluralist legal system, in which common law, statutory law, and customary and religious law operate to regulate most aspects of life, including marriage. The minimum statutory age for marriage is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys, according to the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 2017 (GoB, 2017). It should be mentioned here that this Act replaces the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929. According to the CMRA 2017, any person arranging, performing or ‘contracting’ a child marriage, can be convicted of an offence, with a penalty of six months of imprisonment or a fine of BDT 10,000/-or both, if s/he attempts to arrange the same marriage which has been prevented in the first instance. Parents can be convicted for a maximum of two years of imprisonment and a minimum of six months of imprisonment or a fine of BDT 50,000/-or both if they permit or ‘negligently’ fail to prevent their child from being married. If any adult male or female is marrying an underage female or male, he or she will be punished with an imprisonment up to 2 years or a fine up to BDT 100,000/- or both.

The new law has increased the punishment for committing or assisting in child marriage. The punishment provision has also covered the marriage registrars who directly get involved in child marriage. The marriage registrars can be convicted for a maximum of two years of imprisonment and a minimum of six months of imprisonments or a fine of BDT 50,000/-or both and the license of the marriage registrar will also be cancelled. If an impending child marriage is brought to a court’s notice, it can be prevented through an injunctive Court Order. However, the Child Marriage Restraint Act-2017 has a Special Provision that allows a boy or a girl to get married before reaching the statutory age limit. The major concerns of civil society and Women rights activists regarding this law is the Special Provision that allows marriage under the statutory minimum age. As per section 19 of the Act, a child marriage would not be considered an offense if it was directed by the court order with the consent of parents or legal guardian for the ‘best interest of the girl’. In 2004, the Birth and Death Registration Act was amended to make it mandatory for the bride and groom to have a birth certificate before a marriage can be registered. In addition to specifying a minimum age for marriage, statutory law criminalizes the giving and taking of dowry, which is subject to prosecution under the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980 (GoB, 1980). The Act defines ‘dowry’ as ‘any property or valuable security’ given or agreed to be given as consideration for the marriage, by one party to another party to a marriage, or their parents (or any other person).

Verma and Srinivasan (2014) argue that poor implementation of birth and marriage registration systems, lack of enforcement of the child marriage prevention law; poor public awareness and knowledge on the need to register all births and marriages, and lack of clarity regarding the registration process were other reasons for the continuation of child marriage in Bangladesh. They report that the enforcement of child marriage prevention laws and compulsory registration of birth and marriage are weak, and punitive measures against those violating the legal age at marriage or issuing false birth certificates to legitimize marriages involving minors are not stringent enough to deter families and community leaders from breaking the law.

1. The child marriage restraint Act, 1929

In Bangladesh, the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 is the main law for controlling early marriage. According to the Act the minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years for females. Along with this Act early marriage is punishable by law. Section 3 states the punishment for male adult below twenty-one years of age marrying a child. This section states that “Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age and below twenty-one, contracts a child marriage shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to fifteen days, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.” Moreover, section 5 of the said Act stipulates the punishment for solemnizing a child marriage. According to this section, “Whoever performs conducts or directs any child marriage shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine, unless he proves that he has reason to believe that the marriage is not a child marriage.”

Section 6 mentions the following punishment for parent or guardian connected with child marriage:

“(1) Where a minor contracts a child marriage, any person in charge of the minor, whether as parent or guardian or in any other capacity, lawful or unlawful, who does any act to promote the marriage or permit it to be solemnized, or negligently fails to prevent it from being solemnized, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine. It provides that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment.

(2) For the purpose of this section, it shall be presumed, unless and until the contrary is proved, that where a minor has contracted a child marriage, the person in charge of such minor has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnized.”

Although early marriage is prohibited legally, occurrences of early marriage are still happening in rural areas of the country. There are laws against it in the country but they are not executed properly. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 stemmed from a campaign that helped reposition women, family life, and childbearing within modern India. While the Act did not declare child marriages invalid, it helped pave the way for change.

2. The Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004

The situation of early marriage is increased by the fact that most births go unregistered. The Law and Local Government Ministry is putting the representation of the Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004 in force since 2006. The Act requires birth certificate as proof of age for a number of essential services such as marriage registration, obtaining a passport, and enrollment in school. But in Bangladesh, birth registration is itself a typical problem. In spite of the law against child marriage, early marriage of girls, especially in rural, is widely prevalent. Enforcement of the relevant law is constrained mainly due to fact that the birth registration system is not implemented fully for which actual age of girls cannot be ascertained definitively.

3. The children Act, 1974

Article 34 of the Children Act, 1974 specifically stipulates the penalty to be imposed for cruelty to children. According to section 34 of the said Act, “If any person over the age of sixteen years, who has the custody, charge or care of any child assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes such child or causes such child to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed in a manner likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering or injury to his health, including loss of sight or hearing or injury to limb or organ of the body and any mental derangement, such person shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine which may extend to Taka one thousand or with both.” Appropriately, early marriage is taking place at random showing slight respect to the law. Human-right Protestants and social workers say that according to the law early marriage is a punishable offence, but it is not banned. Besides, people do not follow the law because there is hardly any campaign to make the people aware about it, let alone solving the social problems.

4. The SAARC convention on preventing and combating trafficking in women and children for prostitution

Article 1(5) of the Convention states that “Persons subjected to trafficking” means women and children victimized or forced into prostitution by the traffickers by deception, threat, coercion, kidnapping, sale, fraudulent marriage, child marriage, or any other unlawful means;...”

The SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia: Article 4 of the Convention states that “States Parties shall make civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, in an official registry, compulsory in order to facilitate the effective enforcement of national laws, including the minimum age for employment and marriage.”

5. International instruments

The right to free and full consent to marriage was recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and many subsequent human rights instruments. A number of human rights instruments lay down norms to be applied to marriage, covering issues of age, consent, equality within marriage, and the personal and property rights of women. The key instruments and articles are as follows:

a) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 states:

“(1) Men and women of full age have the right to marry and found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties.”

Similar provisions are included in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

b) The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964

Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964 state:

“(1) No marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties, such consent to be expressed by them in person as prescribed by law.

(2) States Parties to the present Convention shall specify a minimum age for marriage (“not less than 15 years” according to the nonbinding recommendation accompanying this Convention). No marriage shall be legally entered into by any person under this age, except where a competent authority has granted a dispensation as to age, for serious reasons, in the interests of the intending spouses.

(3) All marriages shall be registered by the competent authority.”

c) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979

Article 16.1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 prescribes equally for men and women: “(a) The same right to enter into marriage; (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

Article 16.2 states: The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage.”

d) The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990

Article XXI of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 states: “Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age for marriage to be eighteen years.”

e) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989 has been ratified by all countries in the world. Marriage is not considered directly in the CRC. One must look then to other rights (health, education, survival...) or principles (best interests of the child, development, respect for the views of the child) for guidance on the position of the CRC for early marriage. Despite this, it is clear that the Committee places a great deal of importance in ensuring that marriage should not be concluded too early and that the minimum age for marriage should be equal for boys and girls. Among the most pertinent, however, are the followings:

Article 1: A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 2: Freedom from discrimination on any grounds, including sex, religion, ethnic or social origin, birth or other status.

Article 3: In all actions concerning children ... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 6: Maximum support for survival and development.

Article 12: The right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child, in accordance with age and maturity.

Article 19: The right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parents, guardian, or any other person.

Article 24: The right to health and to access to health services; and to be protected from harmful traditional practices.

Articles 28 and 29: The right to education on the basis of equal opportunity.

Article 34: The right to protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Article 35: The right to protection from abduction, sales or trafficking.

Article 36: The right to protection from all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspect of the child's welfare.

Thus, the CRC states in Article 1, that a child is anyone under 18 years of age, and in Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it states that persons must be at "full age" at the time of marriage, which must be entered into "freely" and with "full consent." The CEDAW requires minimum age for marriage to be specified by states, and declares child marriages as illegal, under Article 16. In keeping with the spirit of the CRC, an increasing number of laws fix the minimum age at 18 years – the standard also set by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990.

CONCLUSION

It was found that in some cases due to child marriage child marriage may result in a wide range of consequences for women such as denial of education, domestic violence and abuse, lower labour force participation rates, perpetuation of gender inequality, higher prevalence of divorce, abandonment, and separation, perpetuation of poverty, poor quality of marital life, and facilitating sexual exploitation. The study revealed that child marriage and early pregnancy, partly because girls are pressured to prove their fertility soon after marrying and have little access to information on reproductive health. These women are less able to carry their pregnancy to term. Girls who marry and give birth before their bodies are fully developed are more at risk of death, injury, and illness in childbirth. Parents may not be able to afford to maintain their daughters' educational expenditures, and husbands prefer not to send girls to school so that they can have superiority and full control over their wives. Girls may be denied education as investment in education for young girls may be seen as a waste of money since they will work in another household after marriage. The occurrence of child marriage leads to continuation of poverty in the lives of millions of women. In most cases, young girls cannot continue their education due to child marriage. Early exit from education is associated with high rates of unemployment among married women and a lower chance of developing skills for participating in income-generating activities. Consequently, girls married as children cannot play a crucial role in their household maintenance and fall in the poverty trap throughout their life span.

Another negative outcome of child marriage in Bangladesh is the higher incidence of domestic violence. Domestic violence may include beating, torture, humiliation, rape, abuse, and even murder in some cases. Earlier research shows that cultural factors also contribute to higher rates of domestic violence in Bangladesh. For example, wife beating and suffering from domestic violence are considered acceptable by many younger females who were married early in Bangladesh. Child marriage is associated with a broad range of psychiatric disorders. These associations seem to be independent of socio-demographic factors, because the magnitude and significance of the associations remains almost unchanged when controlling for those factors or were significant only with controlling for them. In the context of child marriage, psychological and emotional stresses are linked to forced sexual relations and denial of freedom.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results the recommendations of the study are as follows:

Recommendation for Awareness of Consequences of Child Marriage

Marriage is regarded as a private, even sensitive subject. It is time to raise consciousness about the comprehensiveness of child marriage and its negative impacts. Government should make new laws to

control child marriage and establish nonviolent places for girls to gather and socialize to upsurge access to economic skills and resources. It is needed to create awareness among people, particularly the marginal groups.

Government initiatives

The government will take necessary steps to eliminate child marriage from the society with a bid to slash the maternal mortality rate in the country. Bangladesh's school program provides free cost of school fees and books for girls in school. So for eliminating child marriage from the society with a bid to slash the maternal mortality rate in the country the government should establish secondary school registration program with parents' commitment about not to marry their daughters until they reach age 18.

Disseminate information among people by education

To prevent child marriage, all people need to work together to stop early marriage. At first inform parents and young people about the negative implications of child marriage. Education is the key in this process. Persuading parents to keep their daughters in school is critical for the overall development of girls and postponement of marriage. We shall have to give priority to girls' education.

Importance of birth certificate

Birth certificate should be issued for all children. It is regarded as original age certificate of a child. It should be mandatory in Bangladesh that when a child is born, his or her birth certificate has to be done. So, in future when there is a matter of marriage, there will be no confusion.

Marriage should be registered

Marriage registration is mandatory in Bangladesh and every marriage should be registered. Based on the law, marriage certificate is an official document which regulates the rights and responsibilities of a wife, husband and children. Article 61 of the Civil Code states: "marriage is recorded in the marriage certificate in three copies by the authorities; the original is maintained by the government institution and each party is granted a copy of this document. The marriage certificate is submitted to the records department after it has been registered in the special offices."

Formulated legal mechanism for international instruments

Bangladesh is one of the signatories of CRC and committed to respect the CRC to establish the rights of children. But there is no mechanism in the legal system of Bangladesh to incorporate directly the principles of international conventions and rules at national levels. Though the international conventions set certain responsibilities for the ratifying states, there is no formal obligation to implement the provisions of the conventions. In this context, the state parties should develop enabling mechanism for implementation of the international standards. To make the CRC effective, it has to be a part of the domestic law as well.

Initiative of NGOs and civil society

To prevent child marriage a wide range of individuals and organizations, from community leaders to international bodies, must take action. We need to create awareness among people, particularly the poor. And also we should give our helping hands to them. NGOs and civil society have a critical role to play in the control of child marriage. It should be raise awareness of the health and rights implications of large spousal age differences and inter-generational sex. Efforts should be taken to support married teenage girls by decreasing their economic vulnerability, offering schooling, civic participation, and livelihoods opportunities, developing intervention.

Awareness through Media

Media (radio, television etc.) plays a vital role in broadcasting different programs about the adverse effect of early marriages that rural people can understand since most of them are illiterate. Media can convince them through different programs against early marriage.

Changing attitudes

Changing attitudes is the strategy that underpins all other efforts to end early marriage. Real progress will come from introducing and promoting initiatives to change attitudes towards the gender roles of girls and boys in general and towards the practice of early marriage in particular. There is need to work to change attitudes in families and in societies at large, extend opportunities for childhood learning and education,

offer appropriate support to families and children, and seek to have all children girls and boys recognized as valuable members of society rather than economic burdens.

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