

Children Silent Victims in Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Significance of Legal Protection for their Wellbeing

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Abstract

The widespread practice of child marriage in Bangladesh is greatly harmful to the futures wellbeing of girl children. It is a strong social custom as well as evil and violates the rights of the child to be free from all forms of discrimination, inhuman and degrading treatment. Children do not have a powerful approach to protect them against the abuse of early marriage arrangements rather they are victim of different types of domestic violence. To prevent child marriage, it is needed social awareness along with supportive legislation in keeping with the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in the society of Bangladesh. Unless measures are taken to address child marriage, it will continue to be a major stumbling block to the achievement of child rights. This paper analyses the significance of protective measures with domestic laws and human rights dimensions to protect such practice and uphold wellbeing the children in Bangladesh.

Keywords Child marriage, human rights violation, legal protection, child wellbeing

1. Introduction

Child marriage can be found across the globe but are invasive in parts of Africa and South Asia. The prevalence of child marriage¹ in Bangladesh is the highest in all of Southern Asia and among the highest globally (UNEP & ICRW 2010). According to UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report 2011, 66 percent of girls in Bangladesh are married off before the age of 18, and 32 percent before the age of 15 in Bangladesh. The situation in Sylhet, Chapainawabganj, Rangpur, Jessore, Bhola and parts of Khulna is worse than in the rest of the country. A recent study in 2012 by the International Centre for Diarrhoea Disease Research in Bangladesh (ICDDRDB 2012) shows that the prevalence of child marriage in urban areas of Bangladesh is 53 percent and 70 percent in rural areas. However, it is nothing new in Bangladesh rather is deeply embedded in the improvised and traditional cultural settings (BITA 2007). In practice, certain poorer class communities in the urban rural areas have continued the practice and child marriage are also performed by some high status people who have their own reasons for being 'traditional'. Often rural families' parents encourage early marriage out of fear that the dowry price will increase as their daughter ages.

This practice is of the most common and serious violations of human rights and barrier to individual and social development in a country. Although the practice affects girls more frequently and often coincides with other rights violations but not limited to domestic violence and impeded access to reproductive health care and education. Whatever the motives of child marriage but they usually cause health, psychological and social risks for adolescents and have an impact on the time, care, learning, experience and preparation they need before marriage. After marriage, it has serious physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts on children future. Additionally domestic violence is more common for children in their conjugal life.

Despite the fact that 158 countries have set the legal age for marriage at 18 years, laws are rarely enforced since the practice of marrying young children is upheld by tradition and social norms. Laws and different policies by the government are in place to prevent early marriage. But the initiatives are yet to meet with significant success in Bangladesh. There is a specific state law relating to the age of marriage, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. As per the Act the legal marriage age in Bangladesh is 21 for boys, 18 for girls. So, marriage below 18 for girls and 21 for boys is considered an offence. Muslim law, on the other hand, lays down certain rules and prescriptions relating to the age of marriage, which sometimes come directly into conflict with statutory laws (Huda 1997).

In practice, most of the time, the legal minimum age at marriage is ignored; the inadequacy of birth registration systems reinforces early marriage in Bangladesh. Apart from these, thousands of marriages go unregistered in this country. The Act provides punishment to men who marry children, those who solemnize child marriage and parents or guardians who permit child marriage. Unfortunately, enforcement efforts of the legal provisions are weak and prosecutions are rare for breach of the law. There is also contradiction of domestic laws. Early marriage committees in the district and upazila levels are mostly inactive. In modern world, many developing countries

¹ The term "child marriage" is meant in this paper to cover marriages of girl child under the age of 18.

adopt the child friendly mechanism to uphold the norms of national legislation as well as to prevent of the child marriage. Being a signatory country of CRC¹, Bangladesh should incorporate the various rules of CRC in national plans and policies to prevent child marriage.² This article examines the various regulatory frameworks related to protection of early marriage and what extent this laws incorporate with CRC and human rights standards. This discussion will cover the new direction through international standards for prevention this practice including wellbeing of children in Bangladesh.

2. Major Factors of Child Marriage

This section will discuss the genesis of this practice in Bangladesh context. To prevent this practice it is needed to understand the reasons of the issue. Such discussion will assist to improve the socio-economic environment for protection the future generation. In general, sense of social insecurity has been a cause of child marriages across the world. In socio-economic context of Bangladesh, customs, traditions and common values, the concepts of “self-consciousness”, “shame”, fear and the position that “a girl’s place is at home” are common factor. The weak “culture of rights and right-based legislation” and their relative ineffectiveness compared to “inherited traditions” is one of the reasons of child marriage. The practice is most common in rural and impoverished areas, where prospects for girls can be limited. In many cases, parents arrange these marriages and young girls have no choice.

Hence, social pressures within a community can lead families to wed young children. For example, some cultures believe marrying girls before they reach puberty will bring blessings on families. Some societies believe that early marriage will protect young girls from sexual attacks and violence and see it as a way to insure that their daughter will not become pregnant out of wedlock and bring dishonour to the family. Too many families marry their daughters simply because early marriage is the only option they know. But poverty is one of the most frequently cited factors behind child marriage in Bangladesh. Extreme poverty, girls are often regarded as an economic burden and uncertainty about the future to their families. Poor parents have few alternatives they can afford for the girls in the family, and often view child marriage as a means to ensure their daughter’s financial security and to reduce the economic burden of a growing adult on the family.

Apart from this, limited opportunities for education, including compulsory education, the location of schools far from homes and the bad conditions prevailing at school are the causes of child marriage. Even where education is available, the cost, quantity, quality and content of schooling has an impact on whether girls are forced to drop out and marry early. Often girl’s drop-out from school, especially, in cultural settings where girls are raised for a lifetime confined to household occupations and are expected to marry very young. Most of the family think marriage is a way to ensure that their daughters are ‘protected’, as parents feel their daughters will be better off financially and safer from sexual abuse or illicit sexual contact than if they are married. However, lack of awareness of girls’ rights and consequences of child marriage is the barrier to implement legal provision and steps of governments in Bangladesh.

3. Children as a Silent Victim in Child Marriage

This part will assess the consequences or practical impact of child marriage and the status of married children in their families as well as society. It includes how they abuse by the family members and deprive from their fundamental rights. In every year, millions of girls are deprived from their rights when they are married as child brides. The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 is designed to guarantee certain individual rights³ which are abused only by early marriage. They are victim of such practice as well as the denial of childhood, ending their education, the restriction of personal freedom and the lack of educational opportunity to develop a full sense of human being.

After marriage children deprive from the standard future. They lose the opportunity to choose their partner and must live with that pain for the rest of their lives. Most girls who are unhappy in an imposed marriage are very isolated. They are loss their freedom as well as personal development. Sometimes it increases risks of violence, maltreatment, marriage problems and divorce, the deprivation of the right to receive family care during

¹ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the United Nations, General Assembly, 20 November, 1989, The Convention came into force on 2 September, 1990 in Bangladesh.

² Article 3 (1) of the CRC guarantees that “in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” Article 19.1 of the CRC also requires States to take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment while in the care of parents.

³ Child marriages violate many human rights; including to education, freedom from violence, reproductive rights, access to reproductive and sexual health care, employment, freedom of movement, and the right to consensual marriage.

adolescence, to protection and to other civil rights, in addition to deepening discrimination against girls and women (BNWLA 2001).

Child marriage frequently ends a girl's education forever. Girls who marry young are often expected to take on responsibilities at home that are prioritized over attending school. A lack of education limits girls' choices and opportunities throughout their lives, not just when they are children. Without education, girls and adult women have fewer opportunities to financially provide for themselves and their families. Married girls and young women with low levels of education are at a much greater risk of domestic and sexual violence from their spouses than older and more educated women. There are additional problems encountered by the girl if the boy she marries is also underage. Often children get subjected to more abuse, harassment from other family members. On the other hand, if husband is minor boy, once the boy becomes of majority age and moves out of the village for a job, he may start liking another girl. This leads to numerous cases of bigamy and polygamy. In such cases the first wife, who was married as a minor, is often thrown out of the house or mistreated. Thus, the practice of early marriage is responsible for perpetuating different forms of violence against women (Chatterji 2005). But in Bangladesh domestic violence is socially not often recognized as a crime and remains the biggest threat to children security (Blanchet 2003).

Child marriage directly violence the health rights and well-being of girls: complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the main cause of death among adolescent girls aged 15-19 in developing countries. It makes girls far more vulnerable to the profound health risks of early pregnancy and childbirth. According to the UN, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death for girls aged 15-19 years in developing countries. Of the 16 million adolescent girls who give birth every year, about 90% are already married. UNICEF estimates some 50 000 die, almost all in low- and middle-income countries. Still births and newborn deaths are 50% higher among mothers under 20 than in women who get pregnant in their 20s (UNICEF 2011). Sometimes girls are more vulnerable to HIV by her old age husband and other sexually-transmitted infections, not only due to their ignorance regarding such infections but also due to their lack of negotiation skills with their older male partner. Data published in a stock taking report in 2008 by four UN agencies indicates that only 16% of girls aged between 15 and 24 in Bangladesh have a comprehensive knowledge of HIV.

4. The Statutory Regulation and Its Enforcement

This part will assess the legal provisions and enforcement for protection of children from all injustice in their life. For effectiveness of the existing laws it will assess to what extent corporation of the statutory laws with the international standards for children wellbeing. In Bangladeshi context, it has been found that since independence of Bangladesh 1971, the Constitution of Bangladesh has focused children's rights in its directive principles of state policy in Articles 15, 17 and 25(1) and the fundamental rights in Articles 27, 28(1)(2)(3)(4), 31, 32, and 39(1)(2). Articles 27, 28 and 31 of the constitution lay down the general principles regarding the protection of children from all forms of discrimination.¹ The constitution in these articles provide that all citizens being equal before the law and being entitled to equal protection, must be treated in accordance with law without any discrimination.

However, Bangladesh adopted the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929² which was enacted British Indian period. This Act with amendment is the main law for control the early marriage in Bangladesh. There is no comprehensive law related to protect children with modern concept of international norms. The Act prohibits the marriage between a male under twenty-one and female under eighteen years of age. So as per the Act the minimum legal age at marriage is eighteen years for females. This Act also imposes punishment on parents and guardians involved in child marriages. Section 3 stated about punishment for male adult below twentyone years of age marrying a child.³ Moreover, section 5 of the said Act stipulated about punishment for solemnising a child marriage. According to this section, whoever performs conducts or directs any child marriage shall be punishable

¹ Article 27 of the *Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972* declares that all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. So, children are no exception of the constitutional guarantee. Article 28 of the *Constitution* provides that (i) the state shall not discriminate against any citizen only on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, (ii) women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life, and (iii) no citizen shall only on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort or admission to any educational institution. Article and 32 provides protecting the right to life and personal liberty of a person.

² The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (amended in 1961 and 1984).

³ This section stated 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.

with simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine, unless he proves that he had reason to believe that the marriage was not a child marriage.

Furthermore, section 6 mentioned the following punishment for parent or guardian concerned in a child marriage: (1) Where a minor contracts a child marriage, any person having 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 permits it to be solemnised, or negligently fails to prevent it from being solemnised, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to three months and shall also be liable to fine. It provided that no woman shall be punishable with imprisonment. (2) For the purposes 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 having charge of such minor has negligently failed to prevent the marriage from being solemnised. In this context, Article 34 of the Children Act, 1974 specifically stipulates the penalty to be imposed for cruelty to children. According to section 34, 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.

It is noted that in most countries of South Asia, child marriage is prohibited in the existing civil or common law but is widely overlooked by customary and religious laws and practice. This is found to be common where marriages typically take place according to customary rites and remain primarily unregistered. It has also been found that in most countries, minimum age for marriage do exist but are often not enforced. Most of the developing countries children under 18 can and do marry in both the Civil and the Personal law. But the Shariah law defines puberty for girls and boys to signify the time when they can get married. The co-existence of all these and a lack of awareness make the situation even more complicated (ICRW 2013). Under Muslim personal law, majority begins with puberty, which is presumed to begin at the age of 12 for girls and 15 for boys. It is mentioned here that religious law prevails over ordinary legislation in case of a conflict between the two laws. But in particular cases the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929,¹ as amended in 1984, prevails over religious law. This Act prohibits the marriage of girls under 18 and boys under 21. According to this act early marriage is punishable by law. Due to pre-dating with the CRC, these laws not conform to international standards.

Apart from this, the article 4 of SAARC Convention on regional arrangements for the promotion of child welfare in South Asia provide 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.” But the situation 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, 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.

At the grass roots level, newly formed ‘Gram Sarkars’ have been given the responsibility to prevent early marriage. The National Plan of Action for Children (2005-2010) recognizes that all children, particularly those who are vulnerable, have the right to protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. Although these are not directly aimed at safeguarding girls from early marriage, they are applicable in terms of cruelty and harm to girls. But in practice actions to implement and realize the existing plans and policies are minimal.

Recently, the government approved the National Child Policy, 2011 aiming to provide more facilities for children in Bangladesh. According to the policy all up to 18 years of old will be treated as children and their rights were ensured indiscriminately. This contains specific provisions, Articles 4.2, 4.3 and 6.7 concerning protection of children from all kinds of violence, abuse and discrimination. Moreover, government of Bangladesh passed of *the Children Act 2013* on the basis of the *CRC* that Bangladesh ratified long ago. However, in Bangladesh, *the Children Act 2013* is a positive step and it is a great milestone for the protection of the rights of the child in all sphere of life. The numbers of vital issues on child rights have been dealt with in the *Act*. Furthermore, the *Act* recognises some organisations and members and mentions about their responsibilities for protection of the best interest the children. This Act encourages family based care and protection considering

¹ *The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929* (Act No. XIX of 1929).

best interest of the child and meaningful child participation. However, it can be said that the Children Act, 2013 will cover lacunas of earlier laws. Now we need to create proper awareness and execution about the new Act. Appropriately, early marriage is taking place at random showing slight respect to the law. Human-rights protestors 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 the solving social problems. Although early marriage is prohibited legally, but 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.

5. International Standards on Child Wellbeing

International human rights standards recognize the right of women and girls to live free from physical, mental, and sexual violence. However, in many countries where child marriage is an accepted practice, governments also fail to criminalize domestic violence and marital rape. Girls in child marriages, already vulnerable due to their age and alienated due to their gender and low social status, are thus denied the protection from their governments they so greatly need. The rights of the child were first mentioned in Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1924. The 1924 Declaration was followed by the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, which aimed at granting children a series of benefits, protections and priorities. The rights granted in the 1959 Declaration were later reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted in 1989; Bangladesh is a signatory to all the Conventions (Khair 1998).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights promoted the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women.¹ 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 (UNICEF 2001). The right to a 'free and full' consent to a marriage is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The recognition that consent cannot be 'free and full' when one of the parties involved is not sufficiently mature to make an informed decision about a life partner is a violation of the UDHR. 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.

Thereafter, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964 requires the state parties to take legislative action to specify a minimum age for marriage and stipulates that no marriage shall be legally entered into by any person under this age, except where a competent authority has granted a dispensation as to the age, for serious reasons, in the interest of the intending spouses. The Convention calls upon parties to eliminate the marriage of girls under the age of puberty and requires that states to stipulate the minimum age of marriage. As per the Article 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. Article 2 provides that State Parties to the convention shall specify a minimum age for marriage ("not less than 15 years" according to the non-binding 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. Article 3 also stated all marriages shall be registered in an appropriate official register by the competent authority.

The promulgation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979 was the culmination of the efforts of the global women's human rights movement to bring together in a single document a charter of women's rights. As per the Article 16 (1) 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. Further the Article 16 (2) states that 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.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989 recognizes that children are entitled to human rights in their own right. The CRC reflects a movement away from the view of the child as a recipient of privileges bestowed at the discretion the family, community and the State towards a more progressive view of the child as

¹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217, U.N. Doc. A/810, at 71 (1948); Article 7 reads in part: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

the bearer of legal rights under international law. CRC has been ratified by all countries in the world. Virtually every provision of the CRC is of some relevance to the issue of early marriage.¹

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.

Article 23 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) establish for the rights of men and women of marriageable age to marry. It also states that no marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouse. The Human Rights Committee’s General Comment 28 elaborates on the obligation of the State in terms of equality of rights between men and women. It states: “Inequality in the enjoyment of rights by women is deeply embedded in tradition, history, and culture including religious attitudes. States parties should ensure that traditional, historical, religious and cultural attitudes are not used to justify violations of women’s right to equality before the law and to equal enjoyment of all Covenant rights.”

Similarly, the International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) provides in Article 10 that marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouse. ICESCR Concluding Comments have elaborated further concerns on childmarriage. Some of this concern the following: Differences in marriageable age between males and females violate Article 101; the practice of early marriage has a negative impact on the right to health, education and work and the ICE Committee has also recommended that the legal minimum age of marriage be raised to 18.

In 1989, Bangladesh has been ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989 and also acceded to the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages in 1998 for the best interest of the children. Almost all provision of the CRC is of some relevance to the issue of early marriage. These laws, however, has little impact on the frequency of child marriage in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has not yet incorporated all the provisions of the CRC into its domestic laws. In addition, the causes and implications of child marriage are complex and interconnected, thus there is no simple solution in eradicating child marriage.

5. The Way forward

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries and working to end the practice of child marriage. In this context, governments should adopt following steps to mitigate some of the worst abuses linked to child marriage in Bangladesh:

Need to regulate marriage age

At first there should be fixed the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years. Similarly, it should be required verification of the full and meaningful consent of both spouses. Moreover, it is need to structure of safeguard by law a victim’s right to seek financial compensation after voiding, annulling, divorcing, or otherwise dissolving the marriage and protect the rights of children born out of such a marriage.

Compulsory of Marriage Registration

As per the law marriage registration is mandatory in Bangladesh and every marriage should be registered. Besides this, based on the law, the marriage certificate is an official document which permits the formation of a family by a man and a woman and sets forth certain responsibilities for both parties. Children can get remedy for any kind of family problem (like divorce, maintenance, guardianship) through register marriage.

Strengthen birth registration system

Birth certificate should be issued for all children. It is regarded as original age certificate of a child. So, in future when there is a matter of marriage then no confusion will arise. A much more systematic approach to enforcing

¹ The right to education (Article 28), the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, including sexual abuse (Article 19) and from all forms of sexual exploitation (Article 34), the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24), the right to educational and vocational information and guidance (Article 28), the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas (Article 13), the right to rest and leisure, and to participate freely in cultural life (Article 31), the right to not be separated from their parents against their will (Article 9) and the right to protection against all forms of exploitation affecting any aspect of the child’s welfare (Article 36).

birth registration would greatly help in enforcing child marriage laws and reducing prevalence. Birth registration is a critical measure to check the practice of child marriage as it provides proof of age, based on which an underage marriage can be identified and halted and those abetting it can be punished.

Improve law enforcement mechanisms

Despite Bangladesh's progressive child marriage law, the practice continues to flourish in the country. Improved enforcement would help make the law more effective and prevent the practice easily. Law enforcement training and child marriage education for police and other law enforcement officials, judiciary personnel and community leaders would be an effective first step. The current penalty for those punishable under the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 involves simple imprisonment which may extend to one month or a fine of 1,000 Taka or both. Evidently, such lenient penalties are insufficient to act as a deterrent to the practice. A monitoring system would help identify and impose strict fines on parents who fail to register their children's births. Birth registration is a critical step to counter the practice of child marriage as it provides the proof of age of the bride. Such needs capacity building and such helps in enforcing related laws.

Expand girl's education

It is a very useful strategic tool to stop child marriage. There is clear inverse relationship between education and child marriage. Persuading parents to keep their daughters in school is critical for the overall development of girls and in the postponement of marriage. It is need to expand girl's education facilities, particularly at secondary level. In Bangladesh, only government school program provides free cost of school fees and books for girls in school. It is need to provide this facilities in private school also. Moreover, for elimination the 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 parent's commitment about not to marry their daughters until they reach age 18. In this context more school would be established in every village with lower cost and skill teachers. It would be important to increase the number of teachers and sensitize them to the issue of dropouts as well as engage them in efforts to encourage parents to send their daughters to school.

Provide supportive economic opportunities

Education and economic options should also be offered to young married girl. Special stipend for girls should be increased their enrollment in schools. Stipend has certain criteria, and one of them is that she cannot marry before the age of 18. When girls are educated they are more likely to educate their children. Consequently, mother is able to earn a small income for her family, the whole family begins to change their attitude towards child marriage and keep their daughters in the family. It is strongly recommended that policymakers support strategic interventions at the national and local levels that economically empower girls and women, specifically in locations of high prevalence of child marriage in marginalized communities. At the same time, efforts to enforce property and inheritance laws and to mobilize community efforts may also be required (UNEP & ICRW 2010).

Improve Healthcare facilities

Healthcare facilities should be made available among the poor and in remote areas for better health of both mother and child in Bangladesh. Cooperate with the relevant authorities, mainly the ministries of health, education, youth, culture and promote programmes based on partnerships with NGOs in order to improve the status of this issue in their activities and resources. It should be prepared a survey of the size and characteristics of the early marriage and publish live testimonies and case studies.

Awareness raising campaign

To prevent child marriage, there should be taken awareness raising campaign and advocacy programs and people need to work together to stop this practice. At first it is needed to inform parents and young people about the negative implications of child marriage. Further, local government administrators should be active to dissemination of information regarding the impact of early marriage as well as violence among organizations and media. Similarly, there is need to improve the awareness related consequences of child marriage among religious and community leaders, village elders and members of local and local government if they were approached with awareness campaigns and training workshops. It is needed to create awareness among people, particularly the marginal groups. The Ministry of Education could also help by ensuring that all schools include lessons about the negative life repercussions of child marriage in classroom curricula. It is high 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.

7. Conclusion

Child marriage is a very common but international problem. So, country approach need to addressing the problem properly with local circumstances for successfully remove this problem. Early marriage is a big challenge in Bangladesh. Children are the most neglected segment of the society and hardly have any voice, even within the home. It is because of social norms, patriarchal values, social practice and tradition, poverty, insecurity, parents' concept of safety, etc. As a result, they are consistently becoming easy victims of all sorts of violence. Child Marriage has serious social, economic, cultural negative connotation as well as high-health cost. But no girl should be robbed of her childhood, her education and health, and her aspirations. This issue needs urgent attention to government and public.

In fact, to end child marriage, laws and regulations may be essential but not enough. Cooperation is needed across government ministries and with civil society to end the practice. Bangladesh government in collaboration with NGOs, Civil Society and other stakeholders are trying to address this issue through different policy intervention. But publicity of negative consequence of child marriage is important. The parents and guardians of children themselves must be sensitized to the provisions of the CRC and the laws protecting children in Bangladesh. At the same time, formation of child marriage prevention committees, capacity buildings of the community to change the social norm through community engagement are some few important steps taken by the government to change the mindset. Our country-led national programs should be supported by international cooperation from development partners and UN agencies.

It is needed to modify the legislation relating to the age of marriage. But there is a need to law and policy that adopt a rights-based perspective and with conformity with international principles. Accordingly, governments should ensure re-integration of married girls, who may be mothers, into formal schooling and other non-formal educational opportunities. Further the government should enforced minimum age of marriage laws and to implement legal, policy, administrative and other measures to end child, early and forced marriage in a single generation. Some legislative efforts have been made to combat child marriage in recent years and decades. At the grassroots level, newly formed village governments, have taken on the responsibility of combating child marriage. Stronger enforcement of national child marriage and protection laws, as well as birth registration, is clearly needed.

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