

Conclusion

In a nutshell, girls married off before the right age face a multitude of problems in social, economical, physical and mental realms, pushing countries to take initiatives stop the menace of child marriage in its tracks.

Child marriage has left innocent girls with a number of severely dangerous implications ranging from physical health complications such as maternal mortality, infant mortality, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to emotional and psychological impacts including depression and anxiety.

In addition to violating human rights, child marriage has also brought about social and economic problems like limited access to education and social isolation. As a consequence, countries, especially, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh stepped up the initiatives to curb this menace of early marriage.

Despite the pragmatic measures ~~and~~ by countries and ~~initiatives~~ roles played by civil organizations, tens of thousands of girls are still victim to the ~~more~~ dangerous effects of early marriage -

"Measures by India and Bangladesh"

As also mentioned earlier, India has introduced The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 which aims at stopping marriage of girls below 18 years and boys below the age of 21 years.

This law ~~has~~ ~~also~~ imposes a ~~penal~~ punishment on a person who marries a child or arranges marriage for him a child; a punishment includes jail for two to three years or a fine or both.

Further, if any public servant like magistrate or Nikah registrar fails to report a child marriage or solemnizes such marriage is liable to imprisonment of three years or a fine of up to 20000 INR.

However, In Bangladesh, The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017, ~~makes~~ has a punishment for one breaching the law; The punishment is imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of up to Tk 50,000 or both - while officials like magistrate or Nikah registrar would face an imprisonment of up to 3 years or a fine of up to Tk 100,000 -

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~~India~~
India, ~~further~~ besides, has also launched an awareness-raising program named as "Saksham", ^{on legal rights} which imparts training to adolescent girls, including the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act.

These measures together result in great fruitful results, and to some good extent, child marriages are stopped in ~~to~~ their tracks.

"Measures taken by Pakistan to curb child marriages -"

As mentioned earlier, the Pakistani government has introduced various laws and made amendments to existing laws to prevent child marriages.

Such as a The ^{Punjab} Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1998²⁰ which holds accountable those who marry or arrange marriages of children and has set the imprisonment of two-three years and a fine of ~~up to~~^{up to} 100,000 or 200,000.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act in Islamabad, KPK, Balochistan, and Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 are certain measures Pakistan has taken so far as to curb child marriages -

Adding to it, these laws also make Nikah khawans (Nikah registrars) to verify the age of the groom & bride before solemnizing the nikah.

This would ensure that child marriages are stopped. Furthermore, the Govt of Pakistan, along with civil society organizations, has also launched awareness ~~compa~~ campaigns to educate the people about harmful effects of early children's marriages -

~~In addition~~

Another nice step by Pakistan's Govt to prevent child marriages is that it has made it compulsory to get registered newborn babies and new Nikahs. This would ~~bring~~ prevent people from marrying children under age ~~as~~ fearing the consequences.

In addition, child marriage also itself is a huge and evident instance of human rights violations.

According to the United Nations, child marriage is a form of exploitation and abuse that denies girls their right to education, health, and protection from violence.

Thus, child marriage is considered a severe violation of human rights affecting millions of girls worldwide.

As per UNICEF, 2020, 12 millions of girls are forced into marriage under the age of 18 with just 4 millions of such marriages occurring in girls aged under 15.

In fact, child marriage perpetuates cycle of poverty as girls who marry too early are more likely to ~~expe~~ drop out of school, experience violence, and have limited access to health and other economic opportunities.

Moreover, child marriage ~~is~~ costs countries \$636 in lost earnings and productivity as per World Bank, 2017.

Not only this but child marriage is often also linked to other forms of human rights violation, including forced marriages, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.

Despite the fact the Convention on rights of child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against women prohibit child marriage, yet, it is a pervasive issue impacting tens of thousands of innocent adolescent girls.

Another impact girls face as a consequence of early marriages is severe isolation. As many of them are often forced to leave their families and communities to live with their husbands & this leads to them feeling isolated.

Further, such girls who are forced into marriage before the appropriate time are also sometimes denied the opportunity to participate in social events including gatherings, further exacerbating their loneliness. Plus such girls are also feel difficulty having access to healthcare services, education and other essential services as a result of loneliness and ~~em~~ unempowerment.

Therefore, to make life of young girls safe and prosperous it is a dire ~~&~~ need that girls be not forced to marry too early.



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In terms of social and economic domain, child brides are compelled face little or no access to education and job opportunities.

Due to the fact that girls are forced into marriage too early, they are forced to leave the school with 60% of girls in developing countries leaving the school; thus, school dropout rates see a big surge, with Pakistan not being ~~no~~ except where 44% of girls aged 5-16 are out of schools.

Resultantly, ~~further~~ lack of education, skills, and awareness further fuels the fire and leads to a huge ~~number~~ ratio of unemployment, with 50% of girls living in poverty.

Adding to it, lack of jobs lead girls to being heavily dependent upon their husbands, limiting their autonomy and decision-making power.

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Another disastrous impact of early marriage is depression and anxiety. Girls who are forced into marriage may feel trapped and powerless, leading to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and depression.

Additionally, lack of autonomy in child marriages further adds injury to the insult. Child brides often have limited control over their lives, increasing the risk of frustration, anger, and depression.

Early pregnancy at young age in child brides is also a leading cause of depression as the girls face emotional and physical challenges during the pregnancy.

Moreover, fear of ^{the} unknown and uncertainty of the unknown in child brides including expectations and responsibilities of marriage lead to anxiety.

Compounded with pressure to perform domestic duties which cause a child bride to be anxious about responsibilities like managing household, caring for their husband & in-laws, a child bride is also susceptible to the fear of violence and abuse at home. She fears domestic violence and abuse, leading to anxiety.

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In addition, child brides usually experience traumatic events including emotional and physical abuse, which can lead to Post-Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Further, lack of support from family, friends, and community often exacerbate the feelings of isolation and trauma.

As per an estimate, 15 million girls are coerced into marrying each year around the globe, with many of them experiencing depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

However, India-specific data shows some 45% of girls marrying before the age of 18 experienced depression, 35% experienced anxiety, and 20% experienced PTSD.

Therefore, pragmatic measures are duly needed to control this menace (child marriage).

Moreover, child marriages oftentimes bring about them ^{with} a menace of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Majority of child brides, as they are too young, often lack the necessary knowledge of STIs which worsens the infections. ~~and~~ Plus such young brides ~~are~~ ^{have} limited access to healthcare services like STI testing and treatment which gives free and enough space to the infections to keep burgeoning and cause further damage.

According to the estimate, in 2019, an estimated 1.7 million people aged 15-24 were living with HIV, with ~~60%~~ to young girls accounting for 60% of the new infections.

~~However~~, Adding to it, an estimated 340 million people aged 15-49 years experience curable STIs annually.

Such devastating infections, if left untreated, cause further complications including stillbirth, low birth weight, and neonatal death.

So, it's a must to stop this menace at its inception & this is also possible if child marriages are prevented.

Next to it, Infant mortality is one of the impacts of early age marriages - women who are wedded before the age of 18 are more likely to give preterm birth, a birth of a ~~dead~~ baby before completion of 37 weeks of gestation - Such abnormal birth usually caused baby's death.

Undoubtedly, a country with maximum child marriage rates ^{often} witnesses more infant mortalities too.

~~Somalia~~ And this is exemplified in Somalia where 45% of girls ~~are~~ ^{are} married before the age of 18 and 8% before the age of 15 ~~which~~ due to which Somalia experiences highest rate of infant mortality which stands at 68.6 deaths per 1000 live births. Even if the infants survive, a such newborn baby is left with a number of health complications including Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS), ~~breath~~ in which a baby faces difficulties breathing, and developmental delays including cognitive, motor, and language delays -

~~Hence, child marriages contribute more to infant mortalities and it's need be stopped in its tracks.~~

Further, child brides often have limited knowledge & skills needed for newborn baby, increasing the risk of infant mortality -

Hence, it's child marriage which is depriving this garden of world of its beautiful flowers (babies).

Implications

Moving to the repercussions of early marriages, maternal mortality is amongst the prominent effects. Adolescent girls who are forced to marry before the right time are more likely to experience complications during pregnancy and child birth due to their immature physical development, increasing the risk of maternal mortality. Adding to it, child brides are seen having very limited education and awareness about pregnancy and childbirth which leads to severe health outcomes such as maternal mortality. Further, the fact child brides experience malnutrition and anemia further fuels the fire and results in maternal mortality. ~~These child marriages bring with them a number of complications which are most likely to cause maternal~~

As per the statistics, some 50,000 girls under the age of 18 die each year due to pregnancy-related complications, and alone in 2017, 300,000 girls died due to pregnancy-related issues with majority of these deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Another study tells a country with highest number of child marriage experiences ^{usually} higher number of maternal mortality. Take South Sudan by example, the percentage of girls who marry before the age of 18 stands at 52% and that of those marrying before 15 stands at 9%, ~~has~~ as a result, 1223 deaths occur per 100,000 live births.

Thus, child marriage has far-reaching aftereffects and ensnares lives of tens of thousands of ~~babied~~ ^{impeccable} girls.

"Pakistan and Early marriages"

Early marriages have ensulphed the childhood of millions of girls in many countries with Pakistan being no exception.

Nearly 18% of girls are married off in Pakistan before they reach the minimum set age limit.

According to UNICEF, Pakistan is home to nearly 19 millions of child brides, with girls ~~being~~ as young as 11 or 12 being married off.

This practice of child marriage is deeply rooted in tradition, culture, and customary practices and is often linked to poverty, protection of honor, as it is thought that honor would remain secure and earning burden would decrease to some level after children are married off.

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In Pakistan

These child marriages with high prevalence in Sindh, accounting for 43.1% and in Punjab which makes up the 29.9% of the total.

In point of reality, such marriages are arranged without the consent of child brides which is not only a human rights violation but is strictly against the teachings of Islam as Islam gives full freedom to girls to choose their life partners as per their will; the marriage of Hazrat Bibi Khadija peace be upon her is the glaring instance of this where Hazrat Bibi Khadija peace be upon her chose to marry Holy Prophet according to her wish.

Under Islam

Since Pakistan is an Islamic Republic, brides and grooms must have a freedom to in choosing their spouses as they are going to spend their rest of life; thus, they should be allowed to marry matching grooms in order to avoid far-reaching after-effects.

Defining child/early marriage, as far as its definition is concerned it can be defined as the marriage of boys and girls whose ages are not in accordance with the marriage-related laws in a country.

For instance, as per UN, such boys/girls whose age is less than 18 years are not legally eligible to marry. However, in India, as per the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the minimum age set for boys is 21 years & for girls; 18 years; same is the law in Bangladesh too where ^{the} Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 does not allow a girl to marry unless she reaches ~~in~~ 18 years minimally. Whereas, in Pakistan marriage-age-specific laws differ in different provinces and the capital.

Islamabad, KPK, and Balochistan follow the Child Marriage Restraint, 1929, as per which minimum age for girl's marriage is set at 16 years and for boys; 18 years.

However, both ^{the} Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 & the Punjab ~~M~~ Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017, set the age ~~for~~ of both boys and girls for marriage at 18 years.

These laws, in fact, were introduced to provide protection to adolescent girls, but still, tens of thousands of innocent girls are subjected to the menace of early marriages which bury their beautiful dreams.

Introduction

Child marriage is a kind of marriage where brides or grooms or both marry at the age less than which is prescribed by laws of a country.

Every country has different laws regarding marriages; therefore, minimum age set for marriage varies from country to country.

However, as per UN, minimum age for the marriage is 18 years.

Child marriage has severely impacted lives of millions of girls socially, economically, physically, & mentally.

Thus, governments and civil society organizations have taken pragmatic measures to cope with this menace.

Child marriages bring about a wide range of implications that include maternal mortality, infant mortality, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) besides emotional and psychological effects including depression and anxiety, and social and economic problems like limited education and economic opportunities.

Sadly, human rights violations is a bitter fruit of early marriages, too.

In order to cope with menace of early marriages,

various countries have stepped up legislative measures to prevent child marriages, and civil society organizations have played a pivotal role in this regard, too.

Outline

Implications of early marriages

1 Introduction

Thesis: Early marriages have severely impacted lives of millions of girls socially, economically, physically, and mentally; therefore, governments of different countries and civil society organizations have taken pragmatic measures to curtail the prevalence of early marriages.

2 Defining child/early marriage

3 Pakistan and early marriages

4 Implications of child/early marriages

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4.1.1 Maternal mortality

4.1.2 Infant mortality

4.1.3 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

5.1 Emotional and Psychological implications

5.1.1 Depression and Anxiety

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6.1 Social and economic impacts

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7 Human Rights Violations

8 Measures taken by Pakistan to curb this menace

9 Measures taken by India and Bangladesh to prevent early marriages.

10 Conclusion