

Consequences of Child Marriage in Bangladesh: An Overview

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Date of Submission: 12-01-2023

Date of Acceptance: 24-01-2023

ABSTRACT:

In Bangladesh the factors driving child marriage are poverty, natural disasters, and lack of access to education, social pressure, harassment, and dowry. Child marriage is an adjustment mechanism for poor families. Child marriage may be a wide-ranging drawback in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage before age 18 in the world. The present study shows that Child Marriage has serious social, economic, cultural negative connotation as well as high-health cost. Girls married early are more likely to have early child bearing, which puts mother's life in danger, causes miscarriage, infant mortality, and malnutrition. Maternal health risks are very high and risks of death in pregnancy and delivery in girls under age 15 is 5 times more for a women in their 20s. Child marriage puts girls in risk and poverty. Girls marrying early has chance of being poor and remaining poor throughout. Such marriage limits their right to education, their right to have a decent life, and endangers health and diminishes her chance and prospect for personal growth and development. They become a social problem.

Keywords: Child marriage, Circumstance, poverty, uneducated, Social problem.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The practice of child marriage reflects deep-rooted norms and unequal status of girls in society as females are often seen as financial burdens. It has decreased in the 30 years, but rather slowly. Poverty and low literacy are deciding factors, but evidence suggests that child marriage is practiced across all backgrounds and social divides. Over 50 percent of Bangladeshi women who are now in their mid-20s were married before they turned 18. Nearly 18 per cent were below 15 years of age. Parents wield major influence in the marriage of their children in South Asian cultures. Girls are usually burdened with maintaining their family's honor. When a girl child reaches puberty,

parents worry about protecting her chastity. It is a major barricade to stopping child marriage. Because parents who decide to marry off girl children feel a real or perceived fear of sexual violence at onset of puberty, according to a recent research. But many married adolescents experience and accept physical and sexual violence. As many as 33 percent of adolescent girls believe a husband is justified in hitting his wife. The perception of girls choosing to begin sexual activity outside of marriage is also seen as a threat to social norms. They are considered 'stained' for perceived compromise of 'purity and honor'.

Conceptual Framework:

Child marriage is a big problem in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has the fourth highest rate of child marriage under the age of 18 in the world. Child marriage has been illegal in Bangladesh since 1929, and since the 1980s the minimum marriage age has been set at her 18 for a woman and 21 for a man. Lack of government action and disregard for local government consent to child marriage, including for young girls. Domestic poverty usually causes girls to marry early. The practice of child marriage reflects deep-rooted norms and the unequal position of girls in society. Because women are often seen as a financial burden. It's been on a downward trend for 30 years, but it's gradual. Poverty and low literacy are the main drivers, but evidence suggests that child marriage is practiced across all backgrounds and social disparities. In Bangladesh, more than 50% of women in their 20s are now married before they turn 18. Nearly 18% she was under the age of 15. In South Asian cultures, parents have a great influence on their children's marriages. Girls usually carry the burden of upholding family honor. When a girl reaches puberty, her parents worry about protecting her virginity. Stopping child marriage is a major barrier. A recent study found that parents who decide to marry girls have an actual or perceived fear of sexual violence during early adolescence. However, many married young

people experience and accept physical and sexual violence. Up to 33% of adolescent girls believe that her husband has the right to beat his wife. The perception that girls choose to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage is also seen as a threat.¹

Present Status of Child Marriage in Bangladesh

Child marriage up 13% during Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh

Loss of income of parents and school closures amid the pandemic are the main reasons behind the increase in child marriages

Bangladesh witnessed a 13% increase in child marriages during the Covid-19 pandemic last year as the deadly virus massively affected societies and economies, pushing many into extreme poverty.

Child marriage has always been a huge obstacle to development for countries like Bangladesh, and the virus appeared to have negative effect on efforts to combat it.

The gender justice and diversity department of Brac, the world's largest NGO, found that child marriage increased by 13% when it conducted a survey to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and adolescents in 11 districts across the country last year.

This is the highest rate of child marriage in Bangladesh in the last 25 years. The country had been becoming a role model in various social advancement indexes, and had reduced child marriage to a great extent.

The survey found that the loss of income of parents and school closures amid the pandemic are the main reasons behind the increase in child marriages.

According to various non-governmental organizations, child marriage increased at an alarming rate in the months May, June, July, August, and September. The government, through the local administration, law enforcement agencies, and with help of NGOs, has been working hard to prevent child marriages across the country.

Pabna Sujanager Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Raushan Ali saved a 15-year-old girl in the upazila when her family forcibly wanted to marry her off to a man from neighbouring upazila.

Ali arrived at the house with police and was able to arrest the would-be groom. The mobile court later sentenced him to seven days in jail.

In Dharmapur area of Gaibandha district, a 14-year-old schoolgirl was saved from early marriage by the local administration as they took immediate

action to stop the marriage after receiving a call from neighbours on the Child Helpline 1098.

Although the government was able to stop a few such child marriages, others evaded the eyes of the local administration and law enforcement agencies. Child marriage and violence against women and children during the pandemic received top priority at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs last October

According to Women and Children Affairs ministry's data, child marriage has increased in Kurigram, Natore, Jessore, Kushtia, Narsingdi and Jhalokati districts.

As per the official data, 231 child marriages occurred across the country in the first three months (March to June) of the lockdown last year, while the highest number of 61 child marriages took place in the northern district of Kurigram.

The second highest number of child marriages, 23, took place in Natore district followed by 15 each in Jessore and Kushtia.

Besides, 10 child marriages have taken place in Jhalokati, eight each in Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Narsingdi, seven in Gaibandha and Cox's Bazar, six each in Nilphamari and Ladhipur, and five each in Chittagong and Rajshahi.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), said 59% of girls in the country are married before the age of 18, while 22% are married before their 15th birthday.²

Explaining why child marriage has increased during the pandemic, Anam said all educational institutions in the country remained closed to prevent the spread of the virus and many people also lost their jobs. Many parents grew worried about keeping their children with them because of social security concerns.

The situation prompted the parents to arrange marriages for their teenage daughters.

Chowdhury Mohiman, manager of the Child Helpline 1098, run in collaboration with UNICEF, said the reported cases of child marriages received by the child helpline have gone up alarmingly during the pandemic period.

In April last year, he said, the Child Helpline received 450 phone calls related to child marriage. "Going by the number of pleas received from adolescent girls to stop child marriages, we see a trend of increase in attempted child marriages in recent times as opposed to pre-pandemic days.

¹ Atkin, D. (2009). Working for the future: Female factory work and child health in Mexico. Unpublished Manuscript, Yale University, p .13.

² Amin, S., & Huq, L. (2008). Marriage considerations in sending girls to school in Bangladesh: some qualitative evidence.

Now, we are getting more than 150 such calls in a month,” he added.

According to Save the Children’s Global Report, about 200,000 girls in South Asia were at risk of new child marriages in 2020, while an additional 2.5 million girls fall victim to child marriage by 2025.

Child Marriage: A Global Concern

According to ladies Not Brides (a international partnership of 500+ civil society organizations committed to ending kid wedding and sanctionative ladies to fulfill their potential), kid wedding may be a widespread drawback across the continents and affects the lifetime of several kids globally. The follow reaches across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. Child brides will be found in each region within the world, from the center East to continent and South Asia to Europe. Quite 700 million girls World Health Organization are alive these days were married underneath the age of eighteen. Moreover, 1/3 of those girls were married before they reached the age of fifteen. child wedding has the best prevalence within the developing world. At present, unprecedented attention is being paid to child wedding globally. Ending child wedding by 2030 and up gender equality is enclosed as a key target within the United Nation’s property Development Goals (SDG’s), adopted in Sept 2015.

Child Marriage in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world, after Niger, the Central African Republic, and Chad, according to the United Nations children’s agency, UNICEF. In the period 2005 to 2013, according to UNICEF, 29 percent of girls in Bangladesh married before the age of 15 and 65 percent married before the age of 18. Child marriage around the world is associated with many harmful consequences, including health dangers associated with early pregnancy, lower educational achievement for girls who marry earlier, a higher incidence of spousal violence, and an increased likelihood of poverty. Research shows that globally girls aged 10-14 are five times more likely to die during delivery than mothers aged 20-24; girls aged 15-19 are still twice as likely to die during delivery than women aged 20-24. The link between lack of or poor education and child marriage is borne out by research finding that in Bangladesh women with primary, secondary and higher education, compared to women with no formal education, were respectively 24 percent, 72 percent, and 94 percent less likely to marry at a young age. A study across seven countries found

that girls who married before the age of 15 were more likely to experience spousal abuse than women who married after the age of 25. Global data shows that girls from the poorest 20 percent of families are twice as likely to marry before 18 as girls whose families are among the richest 20 percent. In other respects, Bangladesh has been cited as a development success story, including in the area of women’s rights. The UN cited Bangladesh

“impressive” poverty reduction from 56.7 percent in 1991-1992 to 31.5 percent in 2010. Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment, according to the UN. Maternal mortality declined by 40 percent between 2001 and 2010. Bangladesh’s success in achieving some development goals begs the question why the country’s rate of child marriage remains so high. This report aims to help answer that question and suggest ways in which Bangladesh’s government can apply effective strategies to achieve comparable success in reducing child marriage. In Bangladesh there are several factors driving the high rate of child marriage. Gender discrimination feeds social attitudes and customs that harm girls at every stage of their lives and fuel the country’s extremely high rate of child marriage. Desperate poverty remains a daily reality for many families in Bangladesh, and many parents see child marriage as their best option to safeguard the future of a daughter they feel they can neither feed nor educate nor protect. Bangladesh’s status as one of the countries in the world most affected by natural disasters and climate change adds an additional element of hardship to many families, especially those living in the most marginal and disasteraffected parts of the country. Bangladesh’s government has responded to the growing attention to the harms linked to child marriage by promising swift action. At the July 2014 Girl Summit in London, Bangladesh’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pledged to take steps to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh and to ultimately end it by 2041. She committed, by 2021, to end marriage for girls under 15 and reduce by more than one-third the number of girls between the ages of 15 and 18 who marry. As part of this effort, she pledged that her government would revise Bangladesh’s law which prohibits child marriage, the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) before 2015, develop a national plan of action on child marriage by the end of 2014, and take other steps to change social norms and engage civil society in the fight against child marriage.

The minimum age for marriage in Bangladesh

The Child marriage Restraint Bill keeps the legal age of marriage as 18 for girls and 21 for men however introduces exceptions in “special cases” or for within the “best interests” of the adolescent.

Causes of Child Marriage in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is not the only country facing the problem of child marriage rather other countries of the world are also facing the same problem. But it is a matter of great concern that the problem is more serious in Bangladesh. Poverty, lack of education, lack of awareness, economic and social status, and lack of proper religious knowledge are the key factors causing the child marriage in Bangladesh. Beside these are some other causes liable for the child marriage in Bangladesh such as insufficient social security, low employment opportunity, tradition, parents’ anxiety to protect the chastity of their daughters and flexibility of the existing laws of the country. The causes are illustrated below

Poverty

The derivation of child marriage in Bangladesh is poverty. It is the major cause and also the consequence of child marriage in Bangladesh. Poverty is a curse for Bangladesh as it is the main obstacle to the development of the country. It has become such an epidemic which gives birth to all problems in the society. Poor parents who cannot afford educational and other expenditure of their daughter try to reduce their financial encumbrance and they use early marriage as a means to move their financial encumbrance to the husband’s family related to their daughters. Still 24.3percent (%) people of the country live below the upper poverty line and 12.9 percent (%) live below the lower poverty line (HIE Survey, 2016). Child marriage is directly connected with poverty as in Sylhet 11.5 percent (%) people live lower poverty line and 16.2 percent (%) live upper poverty line (Jisun, 2016) and the rate of child marriage in Sylhet is 11 percent (%) (BBS Report, 2015). In Rangpur division 30.5 percent (%) people live in lower poverty line and 47.2 percent (%) live in upper poverty line (HIE Survey, 2016) and the child marriage rate in Kurigram is 55.3 percent (%) (BBS Report, 2015). Poverty motivates poor parents to arrange early marriage for their children, especially daughters. If the poverty rate is high, the rate of child marriage is also high but if the financial condition is better the rate of child

marriage is lower (Islam, Haque, & Hossain, 2016)³

Lack of Education

Education is the key of the development of a nation. No nation can develop without proper education. Lack of education is one of the prime factors causing child marriage in Bangladesh.

Education has burly negative connection with child marriage (Islam, Haque, & Hossain, 2016). Uneducated children cannot understand the consequences of child marriage as a result they do not

deny their parents proposal to marry early. When a girl is dropped out from school generally her parents try to arrange her marriage as early as possible. The rate of child marriage is lower among the higher educated person and it is higher among the lower educated or uneducated persons (Islam, Haque, & Hossain, 2016). Lower educated and uneducated males are more interested to marry girls aged below 18 years than the higher educated males (Kamal, Hassan, Alam, & Ying, 2014). Education has direct impact to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh; in Barisal 15.11 percent (%) people have no education and in Rajshahi 27.9 percent (%) (Islam, Haque, & Hossain, 2016) and the rate of marriage less than 18 years is 11.7 percent (%) in Barisal and 28.5 percent (%) in Rajshahi (Islam, 2014).

Economic and social status

Economic and social status of the family is sometimes liable for child marriage. Some families which are not economically solvent enough treat their daughters as burden and think of getting rid of them by marrying them off early (Ferdousi, 2014). To mitigate expense of the family poor parents arrange child marriage as it ensures one person less for feeding, clothing, health and education. Dowry is a common phenomenon among the poor and lower section of the society in Bangladesh. Sometimes parents of the bride groom who do not have any other means to arrange money arrange early marriage of their son to take dowry and the parents of the bride agree because there is a fear among them that the amount of dowry will increase with the age of their daughter

Lack of Proper Knowledge and Traditional

Due to lack of proper knowledge especially among the Muslims girls are often

³ Basu, S., Gupta, S. D., Mukherjee, S., Pande, R., & Singh, S. (2008). Knot Ready: Lessons From India on Delaying Marriage for Girls, p. 86.

victim of early marriage. Sometimes Imam (Muslim religious leader) induces the parents to arrange early marriage by giving wrong explanation of religious such as it is faraz (religious obligation) for the parents to arrange marriage of their child when they attain puberty, becoming mother at early age is good for health, less aged girls are more obedient and can take proper care of the husband and their productive capacity is more etc. and for this reason people of theocratic thinking are more interested in child marriage. Beside these, the general perception prevailing in the society is that a girl will lose beauty with the growth of age and she would become attractive, as a result she will not get good bride groom; so it is wise to arrange marriage early

Lack of Awareness

Lack of awareness and knowledge especially in the slum and rural area of Bangladesh regarding the consequences of early marriage is also responsible for child marriage. Early marriage has adverse health effects. It causes early pregnancy which is a high risk not only for the mother but also for her baby. It also has risk of sexually transmitted diseases. But due to lack of proper knowledge of negative impact of early marriage on health parents instead of preventing arrange child marriage

Weakness of Laws

The laws controlling child marriage in Bangladesh is very weak. Child marriage is such an offence where in parents and other close relatives are voluntarily involved, as a result it is very difficult to prevent this offence. The punishment provided by the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (Act No. VI of 2017) for person who marries child, parents and other guardian involved in child marriage and who solemnizing child marriage, is not sufficient to prevent the offence. Sometimes parents make false birth registration certificate and sometimes marriage goes unregistered (Ferdousi, 2014). As it is not possible to give exemplary punishment by the existing law, people are frequently involved in child marriage.

Main causes of child Marriage

Reasons for early / child marriages

Poverty.

Low level of education of girls.

Lower status given to the girls and considering them as financial burden.

Social customs and traditions.

Statistics:

- According to a UNICEF study.
- 29 percent of girls in Bangladesh married before age 15,
- Two percent of girls in Bangladesh are married before age 11.
- 66 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18.
- Legally, the minimum age of marriage is 21 for boys and 18 for girls.
- Only 45 per cent of adolescent girls are enrolled in secondary school and fewer attend regularly.
- One third of teenage girls aged 15 to 19 are mothers or are already pregnant.

Bangladesh Government Responses to Child Marriage:

The current government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, in power since 2009, has pledged swift action on kid wedding and committed to finish it by 2041. At the July 2014 lady Summit in London, Bangladesh's Prime Minister sheik Hasina additional committed to finish marriage for women underneath the age of 15 by 2021 and scale back by over simple fraction the amount of women between the ages of 15 and 18 UN agency marry. As a part of this effort, she pledged that her government would revise the child marriage Restraint Act (CMRA), develop a national set up of action on child marriage before 2015, and take alternative steps to alter social norms and interact civil society within the fight against child marriage.

Bangladesh's International Legal Obligations

The government of Bangladesh has obligations under international human rights law to protect the rights of girls and women. These include the rights to equality and non-discrimination, to the highest attainable standard of health, to education, to information, to free and full consent to marriage, to choose one's spouse, and to be free from physical, mental, and sexual violence. Those whose rights are violated are entitled to an effective remedy. Child marriage in Bangladesh can result in the inadequate fulfilment and protection of these rights, and the failure to protect these rights can also increase the risk of child marriage.

Bangladesh is a party to the core international treaties that protect women's and girls' human rights. Bangladesh has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),

the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

International human rights law recognizes state accountability for abuses by private actors and requires governments to show due diligence in preventing and responding to human rights violations. According to the CEDAW Committee, which monitors government compliance with CEDAW, “States may also be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence.” Under international law, governments are obligated to work towards eliminating harmful traditional beliefs, values, stereotypes, or practices that contravene human rights. They must not invoke “traditional values” to justify violations of human rights.⁴

CEDAW explicitly acknowledges social and cultural norms as the sources of many women’s rights abuses, and requires governments to take appropriate measures to address such abuses. Governments need to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.”

The argument that some practices are cultural norms and thus impervious to alteration cannot justify a government’s failure to address discriminatory practices. The Human Rights Committee, which monitors compliance with the ICCPR, affirms that governments “should ensure that traditional, historical, religious or 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.”

Government Initiatives of Child Marriage

Bangladesh has earned gender parity in primary and secondary school enrollment. Bangladesh’s current MMR is regarding 194 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, it’s fallen by over 66 % over the last 20 years. Impoverishment declined from 34 % in 2000

⁴National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Mitra and Associates (MA), and ORC Macro (ORCM). (2001). Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 1999-2000. Dhaka, Bangladesh and Calverton, Maryland [USA]: National Institute of Population Research and Training, Mitra and Associates, and ORC Macro

to 24.8 % in 2015.⁵ the govt. has taken necessary steps in facilitating access to education by elimination primary level college fees. Asian country Government has not taken adequate measures to prevent child wedding, in spite of numerous information and commitment to try to do thus. in a very recent statement Prime Minister created a trial to lower the age of wedding for ladies from eighteen to sixteen years. In 1994, the feminine regular payment Programme Gender Equality in Asian country (FSP) was launched, supplying stipends to women aged eleven to fourteen in teaching providing they’d seventh fifth group action and a 45 score in end-of-year tests similarly as providing they continue to be unwed till sitting the secondary school Certificate or reaching the age of 18. This theme has been sure-fire in delaying wedding and family relationship similarly as increasing the likelihood of access to the labour marketplace for young ladies. In 1995, 1.1 million Bangladeshi women attended secondary school; by 2018, this had augmented to three.9 million. the globe Bank report suggests that the proportion of married women between thirteen and 15 years more matured born from 29th to Bastille Day, while for those aged from 16 to nineteen the proportion born from seventy two to 65th, implying a big result of the regular payment programme on delaying wedding. The joint programme targets alternative Millennium Development Goals like reducing impoverishment (MDG #1) by empowering ladies, increasing universal education (MDG #2) by editing the program from a gender perspective, rising child and maternal health (MDGs #4 and #5) by providing higher access to health look after ladies and women, and combating HIV and AIDS (MDG #6) by addressing women’s vulnerability to the virus.⁶

The Joint Program to deal with Violence against ladies in Asian country involves 9 global organization agencies, eleven government ministries and an oversized variety of native development partners. It operates on 3 tiers: strengthening the policy and legal framework so as to cut back violence against ladies, ever-changing attitudes of men, ladies and youth to have an effect on behavior associated with violence, and protective survivors of gender-based violence.

⁵ Ray, S. (2013). Relationship between stunting and wasting in children. Medical journal, Armed Forces India, 69(4), 410.

⁶ World Health Organization. (1995). World Health Organization physical status: the use and interpretation of anthropometry. World Health Organization, Geneva, p.53.

NGO Initiatives of Child Marriage

As a part of the efforts to boost awareness on the difficulty of kid wedding, community radios can begin act a singular campaign from November till Dec. a complete of seventeen community radios nationwide are to blame for distributive crucial info on eleven topics close kid wedding in numerous native languages.

It is discovered through the event that the topics lined by the community radio shows can include: kid wedding, father's role in child wedding, role of academics and community leaders, community engagement, role of government, role of social media, role of NGOs, involvement of boys and harassment among others.

The development of the magazine shows, necessary skills building and promotion connected activities are applied united among BRAC's Gender Justice and variety and Community authorization Programme at the side of People's Republic of Bangladesh Community Radio Association.

World Vision

World Vision works towards the availability of world education for youngsters World Health Organization area unit in danger for exploitation, early wedding, and lower income-earning potential. In People's Republic of Bangladesh, they address barriers to education and work with communities and native governments to enhance the standard of education children receive. The wedding studies 1st programme works with families to coach them concerning the impact of kid marriage.

CARE

CARE is a global humanitarian organisation that focuses on operating aboard impoverished ladies. a part of their mandate includes directly addressing child wedding through targeting the availability of Education for ladies. CARE works with families, communities and native organisations to cut back the prevalence and mitigate the harmful impacts of child wedding through instructional and behavioral- modification programmes.

Existing Laws Relating to Child Marriage in Bangladesh

The current law in Bangladesh that addresses child marriage is the **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (CMRA)** repealing the earlier British law of

1929. The Act sets the minimum age of marriage for a male as 21 years and for a female as 18 years

Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act

In 2010, Bangladesh passed the force (Prevention and Protection) Act. This law offered new hope to victims of force, however has suffered from lack of social control.

The law provided new varieties of recourse and help for ladies and kids World Health Organization are victims of abuse among their families. The law includes a broad definition of force, as well as physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. The law grants magistrates the facility to issue orders providing victims with protection, housing arrangements, maintenance, compensation, and kid custody. The act additionally provides for victims to be connected with shelter and medical and legal services. Perpetrators of force will be imprisoned and/or punished for violations of court orders below the act.

Reform of the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA)

Child marriage has been felonious in Asian nation since 1929 beneath the CMRA. Bangladesh's prime minister tacitly acknowledged the gaps within the law, however, once she pledged in July 2014 to reform the CMRA. Whereas several of the gaps that let child marriage in Asian nation have to be compelled to do with social control of the law, the law itself is additionally associate obstacle.⁷

II. FINDINGS:

This report has presented findings from a few Case studies to examine the real scenario of child marriage in the perspective of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has had to provide policy makers and practitioners with an understanding of the present situation of child marriage in Bangladesh, and the causes and consequences of child marriage within the country. The key findings to emerge from the survey are:

- The prevalence of child marriage is still high in Bangladesh. 64% of all women aged 20–24 were married before the age of 18.

⁷ Rahman, M., Hoque, M. A., Mostofa, M. G., & Makinoda, S. (2014). Association Between Adolescent Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence A Study of Young Adult Women in Bangladesh. *Asia-Pacific journal of public health*, 26(2), 160-168

- There are lower rates of child marriage among younger women compared to older women, suggesting that child marriage rates are decreasing.
- There is a positive correlation between location (urban/rural) and child marriage. The rate of child marriage among all women aged 20–24 years was 54% in urban areas, compared with 71% in rural areas.
- Education is strongly associated with child marriage. 86% of women with no education were married before 18 years of age, compared to 26% of women who had completed secondary or higher education. It is most common for the father of the bride to make decisions regarding the marriage of their daughters.
- There is a correlation between location and awareness of legal age limits. 45% of women in rural areas and 55% of women in urban areas were aware of the legal age of marriage.
- Employment at time of marriage is associated with lower rates of child marriage (57% employed versus 70% unemployed at time of marriage).

Recommendations:

- Government agencies providing assistance to families in poverty or affected by disasters should be better harnessed to prevent child marriage.
- The government and the development partners should focus more on the strategy to keep girls in school, assist girls at risk of child marriage, fight sexual harassment, and provide access to reproductive health information and contraceptive supplies.
- Enforcement of law relating to early marriage is a principal area in which implementation and practice need to be adjusted in order to limit forced, child marriage and its negative effects. Efforts must be improved to raise awareness and educate at all levels of society from grassroots initiatives to governmental policies. Bangladesh's law on child marriage needs to be reformed, but even more importantly, it needs to be fully enforced.
- Government and non-government bodies need to come together to promote advocacy on this issue, being sure to reach out to the poorest and most rural communities in Bangladesh.
- Emphasis should be given for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the birth and marriage registration systems, especially their coverage and accessibility in rural areas enforcing the legal age at marriage, and

strengthening the penalties for non-compliance.

- Empowering a girl is an essential step in the direction of enabling her to choose what she wants in life.
- Contents relating to Child marriage may be included within the school curriculum. This would ensure an open ended discussion and provide a legitimate platform for girls to raise their voices and set an apprehension if a girl is forced into marriage.
- More assistance both technical and financial is needed for the promotion of activities restricting child marriage.

III. CONCLUSION:

Awareness is growing that marriage of girls under age 18 is illegal under Bangladeshi law. Bangladesh is international obligations to protect the rights of girls and women. Comprehensive efforts may address the issue of child marriage to eradicate it completely. Child Marriage Restraint Act After the liberation of Bangladesh till 2017, no progress has been made in the history of child marriage law. The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 did not work very well in the prevention of child marriage. It did not bring much change in the prevention of child marriage. However, the law did not take any effective role in preventing child marriage due to its inherent weakness and social awareness. To prevent child marriage, social movement and social awareness should be made possible so that child marriage can be discouraged.

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