



Committee: Arab League

Question of: The question of ending child marriage

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Introduction:

In the intricate tapestry of societal challenges, the pervasive issue of child marriage stands as a stark violation of the fundamental rights and well-being of countless young individuals. Defined by the union of individuals below the age of 18, predominantly affecting girls, child marriage transcends geographical boundaries and cultural contexts. It encapsulates a complex interplay of cultural norms, economic pressures, and gender inequalities, embedding itself as a deeply entrenched practice that thwarts the aspirations of the youngest members of our global community.

This issue's significance is underscored by its far-reaching ramifications, extending across health, education, and psychosocial dimensions. Child brides face heightened health risks, disruption of educational opportunities, and profound psychological impacts, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. As we grapple with the question of ending child marriage, we must navigate a landscape marked by regional disparities, legal frameworks of varying effectiveness, and the intricate web of cultural nuances that sustain this harmful tradition.

Yet, amid these challenges, there exists a glimmer of hope. Global initiatives, legal reforms, and grassroots efforts are reshaping the discourse surrounding child marriage. The international community, through platforms such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and organizations like Girls Not Brides, is rallying for a future where every child is granted the right to grow, learn, and shape their destiny free from the chains of early matrimony. In delving into the depths of this pervasive issue, we embark on a journey to understand, challenge, and ultimately eradicate child marriage, envisioning a world where the promise of childhood is preserved for every young soul.



The Issue:

1. Cultural Norms and Inequalities: The Roots of Child Marriage

Cultural Dynamics:

Child marriage often finds its roots in cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and view girls as economic burdens. Societal expectations, traditional practices, and deep-rooted beliefs contribute to the normalization of early unions, perpetuating a cycle that endures across generations.

Gender Inequality:

A pervasive undercurrent in child marriage is gender inequality. In many societies, girls are denied access to education and economic opportunities, limiting their choices and rendering them vulnerable to early marriages. The unequal power dynamics further exacerbate the issue, leaving girls with little agency in deciding their futures.

Economic Pressures:

Economic factors play a pivotal role in driving child marriages. Families in poverty-stricken regions may view marrying off their daughters at a young age as a strategy for economic survival. The dowry system, prevalent in some cultures, reinforces this notion, as families see marriage as a means to reduce financial burdens.



2. Ramifications of Child Marriage: A Cascade of Adverse Effects

Health Consequences:

Child brides often face severe health risks due to early pregnancies. Complications during childbirth are a leading cause of death for adolescent girls. Furthermore, early pregnancies can lead to malnutrition and stunted growth in both mothers and infants, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

Education Disruption:

Child marriage disrupts educational opportunities for girls, depriving them of the chance to acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for personal development and empowerment. This perpetuates a cycle of illiteracy and limits their ability to escape the cycle of poverty.

Psychosocial Impact:

The psychological toll on child brides is profound. Forced into adult responsibilities prematurely, these young girls often grapple with mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. The lack of emotional maturity and support systems exacerbates their vulnerability.

3. Global Perspectives: Varied Manifestations and Interventions

Regional Disparities:

Child marriage is a global issue, with variations in prevalence and manifestations across regions. While it is prevalent in many developing countries, instances also occur in developed nations. Understanding these regional nuances is crucial for tailoring effective interventions.

Legal Frameworks:

Many countries have established legal frameworks to combat child marriage, setting a minimum age for marriage and imposing penalties for violations. However, the effectiveness of these laws varies, with enforcement challenges and loopholes often undermining their impact.

International Initiatives:

Global organizations and NGOs play a crucial role in addressing child marriage through awareness campaigns, advocacy, and direct interventions. Initiatives such as the Girls Not Brides campaign seek to unite efforts globally, fostering collaboration to tackle the root causes and consequences of child marriage.

4. Challenges in Ending Child Marriage: Navigating Complexities



Resistance to Change:

Deeply ingrained cultural practices and societal norms create resistance to change. Challenging traditions that have persisted for generations requires nuanced strategies that promote dialogue, community engagement, and alternative pathways for empowerment.

Poverty and Economic Empowerment:

Addressing the economic drivers of child marriage involves implementing comprehensive poverty alleviation programs. Providing families with economic opportunities and resources can reduce the perceived necessity of marrying off their daughters at a young age.

Education as a Catalyst:

Promoting education, particularly for girls, is a powerful catalyst for change. By ensuring access to quality education, communities can break the cycle of ignorance and empower young individuals to make informed choices about their lives.

5. Success Stories and Best Practices: Lessons for the Future

Community Engagement:

Successful interventions often involve community-led initiatives that address the root causes of child marriage. By engaging with local leaders, influencers, and families, these programs build understanding and cooperation, fostering sustainable change.

Holistic Approaches:

Effective strategies recognize the interconnectedness of various issues related to child marriage. Programs that address health, education, economic empowerment, and legal advocacy in tandem are more likely to yield lasting results.

Empowering Youth:

Empowering young individuals to become advocates for change within their communities is a potent strategy. By providing them with knowledge, skills, and platforms for expression, youth can challenge norms and drive positive transformations.

6. The Way Forward: Toward a Future Free from Child Marriage

Policy Reforms:

Strengthening and enforcing legal frameworks is essential. Policymakers must address gaps in existing laws, enhance penalties for offenders, and promote a comprehensive approach that considers the cultural context while safeguarding the rights of children.

International Collaboration:

A united global effort is paramount in eradicating child marriage. Collaborative initiatives, resource-sharing, and knowledge exchange between countries can accelerate progress and ensure that no child is left behind in the journey toward a marriage-free childhood.

Education and Awareness:

Education and awareness campaigns are pivotal in challenging societal norms. By fostering conversations and dispelling myths surrounding child marriage, societies can create an environment where early unions are no longer tolerated.

Key Events

1. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030:

- Date: Adopted in September 2015
- Explanation: Target 5.3 of the SDGs specifically addresses the issue of child marriage, aiming to eliminate this practice by 2030. This global commitment underscores the urgency of the problem and mobilizes nations to take concrete actions to end child marriages within the next decade.

2. African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage:

- Date: Launched in May 2014
- Explanation: The African Union launched a continent-wide campaign to end child marriage, emphasizing the need for coordinated efforts among African nations. This initiative has spurred policy changes, legal reforms, and community awareness programs across the continent, addressing the unique challenges faced by African girls.

3. Girls Not Brides Global Partnership:

- Date: Founded in 2011
- Explanation: Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of over 1,500 civil society organizations committed to ending child marriage and providing support to those affected. This

coalition amplifies the collective impact of various organizations, fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy efforts on a global scale.

4. Change in Legal Age of Marriage in Bangladesh:

- Date: July 2018
- Explanation: Bangladesh raised the legal age of marriage from 18 to 21 for girls, aligning it with the age for boys. This legal reform is significant in combating child marriage, as it aims to delay marriages and provide girls with additional time for education and personal development.

5. National Strategy to End Child Marriage in India:

- Date: Launched in 2017
- Explanation: India, with one of the highest rates of child marriage globally, introduced a comprehensive National Strategy to prevent child marriages. The initiative focuses on empowering communities, improving access to education, and enhancing the enforcement of legal provisions to eradicate child marriage across the country.

Example:

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

1. Legal Reforms:

- Governments worldwide have undertaken legal reforms to combat child marriage. These reforms include setting a minimum age for marriage and enforcing penalties for violations. For instance, Bangladesh raised the legal age of marriage for girls from 18 to 21 in 2018, aligning it with the age for boys, aiming to delay marriages and promote education.

2. Global Campaigns and Partnerships:

- International campaigns and partnerships, such as the Girls Not Brides initiative founded in 2011, have brought global attention to the issue. By uniting over 1,500 civil society organizations, this coalition advocates for policy changes, raises awareness, and fosters collaboration to address the root causes of child marriage on a global scale.

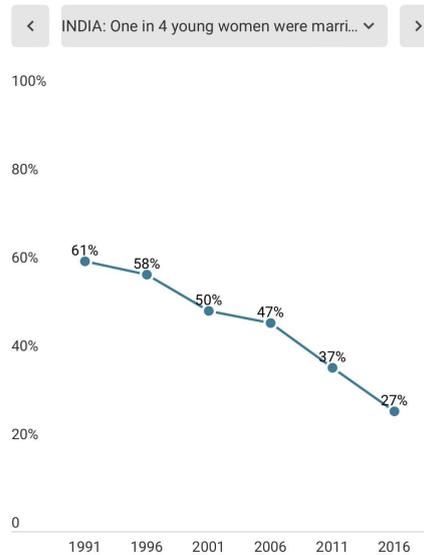
3. Educational Initiatives:

- Programs promoting education, especially for girls, have been implemented to disrupt the cycle of child marriage. Access to quality education empowers young individuals, providing them with knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their lives. Educational initiatives contribute to changing societal norms and expectations.

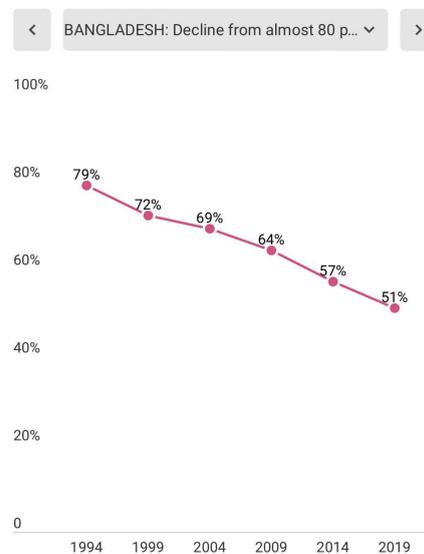
4. Economic Empowerment Programs:

- Recognizing economic factors as drivers of child marriage, interventions focus on poverty alleviation and economic empowerment. These programs provide families with economic opportunities and resources, aiming to reduce the financial pressures that lead to early marriages and offering alternative pathways for young individuals.

5. Community Engagement and Advocacy:



- Successful strategies involve community-led initiatives that address the root causes of child marriage. Engaging with local leaders, influencers, and families fosters understanding and cooperation. Community-based efforts are essential for creating sustainable change, challenging harmful traditions, and promoting alternative perspectives within societies.



Example: The percentage of minor-aged girls getting married at a young age descending from a 79% in 1994 to a 51% in 2019. (Which is still a lot)

Example: From 1991, when 6 of 10 minor-aged girls were forced to getting married, a decrease has occurred until now, as now 4 out of 10 are the ones being force to get married. (Again, still a lot.

Possible Solutions

- 1. Technology for Monitoring and Reporting:
 - - Implementing technology-driven solutions, such as mobile applications and online platforms, for monitoring and reporting instances of child marriage. These tools can empower communities to anonymously report cases, facilitate quicker responses from authorities, and contribute to a more efficient identification and prevention of such occurrences.
- 2. Comprehensive Sexuality Education:
 - - Integrating comprehensive sexuality education into school curricula to empower young individuals with knowledge about their rights, reproductive health, and the consequences of early marriage. Comprehensive education can challenge harmful gender norms, equip individuals to make informed choices, and foster a culture of consent and agency.
- 3. Economic Incentives for Delayed Marriage:
 - - Introducing economic incentives for families to delay the marriage of their children, particularly girls. Financial support, conditional cash transfers, or educational scholarships can be tied to the condition that the individual remains unmarried until reaching a certain age. This approach aims to address economic pressures and promote longer-term investments in the education and well-being of young individuals.



We need to do everything in our power to ensure that [girls'] rights to an education and empowered lives are



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