



Child Marriage: an Issue

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Abstract:

21st century is the century of technology, education and industrial development. The present age is also known the age of knowledge and science. Man has shown the power of his ability and intelligence through the invention of different technologies. Today man lives very educated and prosperous life. But if we look at the back side of our progress, there are many traditional r that obstruct the development of our society. Even today in many parts of India the tradition of child marriage prevails. It reminds us of the life lived by people in the 20th century. Today the growth and expansion of education has taken place on large scale. But there are many social groups which are not ready to come out of their traditional rituals and customs. This study paper identifies that the issues of Child marriage.

Keywords: *Child, Child marriage, Crime, Education, Society*

1. Introduction

According to the Indian constitutional act child marriage is a crime. There is the provision in this act that if a boy of below the age of twenty one years and a girl of the age below eighteen years it is called child marriage. In the cases of such boys and girls who get married, their parents and even the Brahmin who carries out the marriage practice are considered as criminal. And they are punished for their crime according to the provision. On the National Geography channel one documentary on such child marriages in India was shown in the programme of 'Taboo' That episode focused on the issue of child marriage. To remove this problem of child marriage from the society some social reformers and artists have made significant contribution.

Even the government is also very serious about it. But the violation of the law is seen openly. There is no any advantage of child marriage for our society. Instead, everybody has to face its negative result. The result of child marriage proves to be very harmful for the society. The results of such child marriages are very serious which are as under:

The marrying couple becomes parents of children very early at immature age. As a result of it the child who is born cannot get warmth and maturity of responsible parents. So the mental development of the child of such parents is restricted. The boys and girls who get married very early do not get the life partner of their choice. It results into continuous quarrelsome atmosphere in the family which has negative effect on the child.

The girl who gets married at the very early age cannot get proper and enough education so she becomes the victim of exploitation. She cannot bring up her children properly and also cannot give proper guidance to them. Because of early marriage the couple has to carry out the family responsibilities at the small age. Therefore they become old untimely. They have to pass the life in economical crises.

As result of the marriage at the child age and lack of necessary knowledge and understanding, the couple gives birth to more than two children. Therefore the children's development and education suffers. Moreover the economical condition gets worsened.

In this way there are so many ill effects and results of child marriages that touch to the whole human society. As per the constitutional provision we are supposed to obey to both our duty and then our rights. So it is our duty that we remove the ritual of child marriages from our society. All the people should stand together and come out of this traditional ritual and prepare the way for a strong society through co operation among the all. The co operation among the all is very crucial if we really want to come out of such rituals. The rituals of child marriage can be removed from the society if ritualistic society changes its mindset and educated people play their role effectively. The proper age of marriage for a boy should be minimum twenty one and for a girl it should be minimum eighteen. Then let's obey the law and the constitution of India...It's never late to do the good.

2. What is Child Marriage?

UNICEF defines child marriage as a formal marriage or union before 18 years of age. UN Women defines child marriage as a forced marriage before 18 years of age because they believe children under age 18 are incapable of giving their consent.



3. History of child marriage

3.1 Political turmoil

Child marriage, also known as Bal Vivaha, is believed to have begun during the medieval ages of India. At this time, the political atmosphere was turbulent and ruled by Delhi Sultans in an absolute monarchy government. The sultans had an extreme commitment to their religion and forced many to convert, causing socio-cultural unrest, and Hindu women suffered the most. These days of the Delhi Sultans produced practices such as child marriage and lowered the status of women even further. They invented the ill omen of giving birth to a female baby and believed that young unmarried girls caused disaster. Child marriage became a widespread cultural practice with various reasons to justify it, and many marriages were performed while the girl was still an infant.

3.2 Military alliances

Indian feudalistic society became present, where characteristics such as honor, rivalry, and animosity were important qualities to possess, and because of this, families and kingdoms created strong military alliances to preserve or destroy power between them. To ensure the alliance was upheld by both sides, each family exchanged a young member of their household who was reared and educated at the other family's estate. The children were the assurance that the alliance between the families was honored, but in case it wasn't enough, the families made a marriage arrangement to deepen the alliance even further. They believed the marriage wouldn't work if they waited for the young children to grow up because they could possibly pick someone outside of the alliance. If they performed the marriage while the children were still young and

susceptible to their parents' influence, the children would have no choice but to marry who their parents choose to strengthen the alliance.

3.3 The caste system

The caste system is also believed to have contributed to the growth of child marriage. Castes, which are based on birth and heredity, do not allow two people to marry if they are from different castes. This system was threatened by young people's emotions and desires to marry outside their caste, so out of necessity, child marriage was created to ensure the caste system continued.

3.3 Social reasons

Child marriage tradition in India has social reasons too. Indians performed child marriages to get their girls protected against rapes and abductions by foreign rulers. The other reason was to strengthen family relations and bonds, and to satisfy the elder people who wanted to see their grand children marriages before their death. However in child marriage system, the parents used to send their girls to their husband's house only after attaining Puberty. Child marriages caused the young couple to lead family life regardless of likes and dislikes. In some economically poor families, the parents used to perform marriages to their under aged girls even with much elderly men. Some families used to perform child marriages with a fear that the children may deviate off the track after reaching teenage.

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