



Child Marriage in Tarai Region of Nepal

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Abstract: This article is on the causes and consequences of child marriage in Dhanushadham Municipality of Dhanusha District that is in provision-2, Tarai Region of Nepal. Child marriage is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. The problem of child marriage was seen in Tarai region of Nepal, especially it was seen in rural area among lower caste people like; Dalits (Mushahar, Chamar & Dom) and also in some higher caste like; Yadav, Sah and Brhman. My argument in this article is; Child marriage is socially constructed, although the scenario has some changed that youths have been found responsible for doing early marriage for the self-sufficiency of sexual relation. This study relies on qualitative discussion and researcher applied purposive sampling method for collecting details information on both primary as well as secondary data. Findings of the study show that marriage is not a biological event like birth or death; rather it is a social event that is determined by the society. One of the major factors for child marriage is dowry practice in Tarai that badly affected the life of girls and women violence has increased due to early marriage and dowry practice. It highly shows that less dowry demand in child marriage and in the case of higher education demand high dowry. Furthermore, the study requires further study in the whole province-2 and awareness among people. It highly demands to give quality and higher education for both son & daughter for ending child marriage and dowry practices. Government needs to effective monitoring and strong rules and policies to decrease women violence in Tarai.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Society-Culture, violence, Policy & Tarai Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

Nepal has one of the highest rates of Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) in Asia for both girls and boys [1]. Child marriage prevalence among girls is at approximately 40% [2], but varies widely according to geographical region and social strata. Reliable data on child marriage rates is limited at district level; however the 2011 census of Nepal

showed a CEFM rate of 82.5% in Dhanusa district. Taking into the general decrease in CEFM rates in Nepal as a whole since that, Plan Norway calculate the estimated CEFM rate in Dhanusa district to be close to 40%. Parents with little or no education have a higher tendency to marry off their daughters early [3]. Although Nepal's legal age for marriage is

¹ UNICEF-UNFPA.2017. Ending Child Marriage in Nepal. Accessed March, 2019.

² Nepal Ministry of Health, New ERA, and the DHS Programme.2016. Nepal Demographic and Health survey 2016. Pp.83.

³ Adhikari, Ramesh and MS. Ranju KC. 2018. Study on Effects of Economic Empowerment on Reducing Child Marriage. Report Commissioned by Plan International Nepal from School of Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Research, Kathmandu. 2018. Pp.27.

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20 for both male and female (18 years with parental consent). Marriage often has greater effects on girls than on boys [4], for example in the education domain where boys often have the opportunity to continue education after marriage whereas married girls often become trapped with household responsibilities [5]. Although now the women activist facilitating and raising their voice that marriage age should be decrease by seeing the young situation of early marriage as they once fall in love and desire to fulfilling's physical attachment. As per demand by women activists and youths that the marriage age should be 18 years.

While child marriage in Nepal is often not voluntary, there is an increasingly large number of cases of child- initiated marriages in Nepal [6]. Girls and boys self-initiate early marriage amongst each other to avoid arranged marriage [7] or to legitimize engaging in sexual activity with their partner [8]. Lack of sexual and reproductive health and rights knowledge and access to quality sexual and reproductive health services puts children at risk of a rushed marriage in response to, or due to fear of, premarital pregnancy [9]. My previous research (yadav, 2006 & Yadav, 2008) shows that Child marriage highly practiced in Dhanusha district of Nepal that mainly forced for marriage by parents concerned and that highly effect on women education, health and barriers for different opportunity in their personal life. Also study (Yadav, 2017) shows that early marriage and dowry practice has been found the main reason behind of women violence.

The causes of Violence against Women (VAW); and Child, Early, Forced Marriage (CEFM) are multifaceted and interrelated affecting women and girls all over the globe, country and specifically in Province 2 in Nepal. Globally an estimated

⁴ Center for Development and Justice, Kathmandu. 2017. Uncovered Realities: Exploring experience of Child Marriage of Children with Disabilities. Study commissioned by Plan International Norway. Pp.27.

⁵ Ibid, Pp.43.

⁶ Institute for Legal Research and Consultancy Lazimpat, Kathmandu. 2018. A Report on Sectoral Gender and Inclusion Situation Analysis in eight Districts of Nepal. Pp.33. Report Commissioned by Plan International.

⁷ UNICEF and Girls Not Brides Nepal. 2015. National Strategy to End Child Marriage in Nepal-Formative Research.

⁸ Save the Children, Plan International and World Vision International. 2012. Child Marriage in Nepal.

⁹ Women's Rehabilitation Center Nepal. 2013. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women in Nepal.

population of "13.5 million girls are married off each year and in developing countries one in every three girls is married before the age of 18, and one in nine before the age of 15"[10]. Further, in Nepal, the legal age of marriage is 20 years. Further, the 1971 Marriage Registration Act is expected to prevent child marriages, and the constitution prohibits child marriage. However, the practice of child marriage is widespread in Nepal with 37 percent of girls marrying before 18 Copyright © 2016 Kindernothilfe e. V. Created: October 2016 Page 10 of 47 Child marriage years and 10 percent by age 15 (Human Rights Watch, 2016a; UNFPA & UNICEF, 2017). The social, economic, and cultural values promote the practice of early and forced marriages, especially in Dalit and Madhesi communities (United States Department of State, 2011). Geographical, seasonal, and environmental factors also play an important role in driving child marriage (Care International, 2016). Further, there is an increasing trend of love marriages as young people have started making their own decision about who they shall marry (Plan International *et al.*, 2012; ODI, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2016a). Access to mobile phones is seen to play a contributory factor in communication, elopement, and early marriage of young people (Plan International *et al.*, 2012; ODI, 2014).

Child marriage is a global problem which affects millions of people across the world. It is considered a human rights violation because it deprives those involved, especially girls, of education and health services, the chance to learn skills and develop their personalities, and leaves them vulnerable indeed. Although the Government of Nepal has signed many international agreements, its national-level commitments are inadequate to address the issues. In some communities, child marriage is a customary, socially established practice that has been carried on for generations. Child marriage has numerous adverse effects on the overall wellbeing of a girl child who is mentally, psychologically, emotionally or physically not prepared for married life and must be eliminated from its numerous adverse consequences on society. Because the majority of Nepal's population is illiterate, ignorant and disadvantaged, age-old traditions and customs are not easy to do away with. However, education and awareness among people, especially those living in the rural areas, can make a difference. (Maharjan, *et al.*, (2012: 1).

Child Marriage is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. Nepal has one of the highest child marriage

¹⁰ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: High level political forum on sustainable development, 2016

rates in the world, although the constitution of Nepal declared child marriage illegal some 42 years ago, it still remains a major and prevalent social problem in the country. Child marriage most often occurs in poor and rural communities. It says that the most of the effects of child marriage are seen among the girls. In many regions, parents arrange their daughter's marriage without even informing her. It means that one day, a daughter might be playing with her siblings at her home and the next day she would be married off and be compelled to live with her husband and family – the strangers in the next village. Most probably, she is dropped out of school. Ultimately, she will be a victim of domestic violence and might suffer with many health complications associated with early sexual activity and childbearing (ibid).

Marriage is an age-long practice in all the societies in the world. It is through the marriage, people forward their descendants. However, there are dark aspects of marriage such as existence of child marriage. Child marriage (marriages of those under the age of 18 years) violates the rights of the girl child to be free from all forms of discrimination, inhuman and degrading treatment, and slavery UNICEF (2008: i). Marriage marks the point in a woman's life when childbearing becomes socially acceptable. In this study, "Child Marriage" is used to cover marriages of those under the age of 18. The minimum age of marriage has been defined by the CEDAW Committee as being 18 years of age. However now it is 20. Nepalese women constitute 51.50% of the total population. Hence their equal participation in any development activities is not only desirable but also essential as well as to speed up the development process. The slogan of development remains in paper only unless women participate equally in sharing the fruits of the development (CBS, 2011).

Child marriage is a key challenge for the country as the rate of child marriage is 17th highest in the world and almost 40 percent of girls in Nepal are married by the age of 18 and 7 percent by the age of 15 [11]. Child marriage is one of the major issues in Province 2. Nearly half of the population-48%, in Province 2 is categorized as being multidimensional poor. 90% of the population is Madhesi, including 18% Terai Dalit. The literacy rate for females is lowest compared with other provinces (5-15 years is 39%, and 15 above is 63%). All eight districts of the province fall under the category of 'Top ten district with high number of Out of school children'.

¹¹ Reducing Child , Early and Forced Marriage: Save the children,2021

Nepal has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, ranked as the third highest in South Asia after Bangladesh and India (GON, 2016 a). The globally accepted minimum age for marriage is 18 years for both male and females (UNICEF, 2007). In Nepal Criminal (Code) Act (2017) has formally adopted 20 years as the minimum age for marriage. Child marriage has caused both immediate and long-term damages not only to them but also to their families, communities and society. Early child marriage happens by the age of 9 or 10 years in Orthodox Hindu groups such as Mathilies especially with girls. Thus, marriage where one or both spouses are under 18 (or 20 in case of Nepal) is regarded as early child marriage.

Nepal has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world; the prevalence is even higher in Tarai region [12]. Child marriage is a key challenge for the country as the rate of child marriage is 17th highest in the world, and almost 40 percent of girls in Nepal are married off by the age of 18 and 7 percent by the age of 15 [13]. Child marriage is one of the major issues in Province 2. Nearly half of the population- 48%, in Province 2 is categorized as being multidimensional poor. 90% of the population is Madhesi, including 18% Terai Dalit. The literacy rate for females is lowest compared with other provinces (5-15 years is 39%, and 15 above is 63%). All eight districts of the province fall under the category of 'Top ten district with high number of Out of school children'.

The issue of child marriage is multidimensional and the seriousness issues of child marriage in rural area of Tarai Nepal that still need to be researched. Low levels of awareness about the negative impact of child marriage among parents, caregivers, and religious elders; poor implementation of laws and policies to protect children from child marriage; and insufficient government investments in quality education are the underlying causes of child marriage. Further, socio-economic & cultural values including patriarchy promote the practice of early and forced marriages, especially in Dalit and Madhesi communities (United States Department of State, 2011). Against national laws, both male and female married below 10 years of age in the Dhanusha district is not uncommon.

This study has mainly focused to analyze about the causes and impacts of Child marriage in

¹² Bhandari.2019. Early marriage in Nepal: Prospectus for schoolgirls.

¹³ Reducing Child, Early and Forced Marriage: Save the Children, 2021

Tarai region (Madhesh area) of Nepal from provision-2. Study has also supported recommendation for program planner, implementer, researcher and policy level systems and the steps that should be mean of proper education and develop a system of awareness program.

METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive type of field based study that assess the causes and consequences of early child marriage in Dhanushadham Municipality of Dhanusha district, Tarai region of Nepal. Selected area is located in Mid- western region of Nepal, where found Dalits (Mushahar, Chamar and Dom) are living surrounded here in a huge population. Due to the purposive sampling it doesn't cover whole area, although 40 household selected for interview. For the purpose of this study interview conducted with parents as well as married children. The sampling was specially focuses on majority groups such as Maithili, Brahman, Mushahar, Chamar, Dom, Muslim and other lower caste of peoples. Also two FGD has done with both lower caste and higher castes. Where mostly child marriage practice within lower castes than higher castes.

Likewise; data was based on both primary and secondary data. Where primary has collected in the field through interview, observations and Focused group discussion with target people of community for data analysis and secondary data was collected through various Government and Non-Government agencies, books, reports, journalism and related research literatures. This study has reviewed Historical aspects and general information on Marriage and Early marriage and it linkage with violence issues. Based on qualitative analysis, study has focused on interview, Focus group discussion, observation and case study with parents and their married children to show the practice of early child marriage in their particular areas. For this data collection, two sets of questionnaire were prepared for parents and another for their married children at early age (it means before 18 ages of children). After the completion of data collection through various methods and techniques, all the data were coded, tabulated in different headings according to research objectives. After analysis final report has prepared.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

Marriage is an important indicator of family life. Marriage is almost universal for both male and females in Nepal. As per Hindu philosophy, marriage is a religious sacrament and is performed to continue tradition. Such marriage is believed to continue the relationship of husband and wife from this world to the world after death. Father attains heaven from son, infinite abode from grandson and

abode of the Sun from great-grandson (Manusmriti). Hence, Hindu philosophy does not perceive marriage as a contract; rather it defines marriage as classic religious tradition, which is for protecting and continuing this world and attaining heaven. Male and female become complete only after their marriage and marriage is an important social institution for their personality development and continuation of the society.

The definition of Marriage and child marriage vary from country to country, culture to culture, society to society and group to group. Child marriage is usually understood to mean the marriage of two children without physical, mental, intellectual maturity and development. Early marriage also includes unmatched marriage that means the marriage of very young girl with a very old man. Now a day this type of marriage not found usually. The UN Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) and International labor organization (ILO) define child as those who under 18 years of age.

Sage Manu considered the progenitor of humankind and the first king of earth categorically writes in Manu Smriti that if a girl remains unmarried after reaching puberty, her parents have failed in their duty towards her. Another sage, Parasara, wrote that the parents of a girl who reaches puberty before marriage would go to hell. Such rules imposed by holy leaders had their effect upon religious people, and the practice of child marriage was decisively established. Even the marriage of infants became common. The ceremony of marrying off a daughter is called kanyadan, which literally explains 'the gift of a virgin,' and is an act which earns parents much punya, or credit for piety (Maharjan *et al.*, 2012: 1). It can be said that the notion of "punya" and "gift of virgin" has contributed for early marriage among the Hindu followers.

The study on early child marriage in Dhanushadham Municipality is intended to generate qualitative information and critical analysis on early/child marriage in the study area. This study is an attempt to find out the nature and situation of early child marriage. It also wanted to find out the major causes and impact of early child marriage. To find out overall thing this study was done in Dhanushadham Municipality of Dhanusha district. In research, various methods were applied. Observation, interview and questionnaire were extensively used to collect the necessary information. The result of the data collected through various techniques in the field was analyzed descriptively for which descriptive statistics such as percentage table was used. Comparatively very high percentage of child marriage in Dhanushadham Municipality of Dhanusha district. The interview was

taken by children who marry in early age and their parents also to know the family background and socio-economic condition and features of the parents and respondents. The findings are based on group discussion with married respondent's age between 10-18 years and their parents are also.

In total 40 married children respondents and their parents were selected for interview. The respondents belongs to different castes like as Dhobi, Musher, kurmi, yadav, khatwe, Danuwar, keuth, koiree, Biltaaw, Paswan, Halwai, Dome, suri, Teli and Muslim. Among all these caste majority of respondents are musher that is 32.5%. In study area the situation of early marriage of female is higher than male, that is early married female are 70% and male are only 30%. The parents start to marry their children age between 10-18 years. Most of the respondents have got their married in age 14,15,16,17 and 18 years respectively. After married only 10% children are able to go school and 37.5% children are drop out due to the many causes. At the time of study 45% parents are the age between 30-35 years and one each and every parents are bearing at least two-three children. 60% parents are also married in early age that is between 10-16 years. The condition of parent's education is not good. 72.5% parents are illiterate and 12.5% parents have completed their primary level education. Occupation is most important part of life. That's why each and every person is keeping themselves busy in some work. Likewise, the people of this study area busy in different work. We find out that 50% parents are doing agriculture work and 40% are working as labor. So the economic condition of people is not good. Due to weak condition they can't manage their family for a whole year by their income. Only 42.5% parents have some land and other 57.5% have no any type of land.

Generally parents begin to search grooms when their daughters are 10-12 years. In their villages the Tarai community and Muslims were performing rituals and at three stages like Bibah, Gauna and Donga. But now days this type of system has gone. They celebrate Bibaha only for two days. Now the girls are marriage in age 14, 15, 16 and 17 years and they are going their husband home at the time of marriage. Most of the marriages are arranged by parents. Children have nothing to say when their partners are chosen. In study area 80% respondents have not done any discussion with their partners before marriage. They have no need and rights to do discussion or choose their partners due to the social custom and they are not fully developed by physically and mentally. But also most of them are happy to be married at an early age because of ignorance and also because only during their

marriage they get to wear new dresses and given gift and jeweler by their relatives and parents.

Causes and Consequence of Child Marriage

The main causes of early child marriage is social custom, dowry, lack of awareness, poverty, high chance to get groom and weak law enforcement. The primary cause of early/child marriage is the rigid social custom that encourages such practices. Dowry is the main root causes. If they marry their daughter in early; it is better and cheaper in their sense. Parent's education condition is not good. 72.5% are illiterate, so they are not aware about this type of cases. They don't think under 18 years marriage is early marriage. In their mentality they think that when girls start in their menstruation period then they are becoming young and in the sense of boys when their beard comes in face they are ready for marry age. If they marry in early age they are not facing problem to search groom and bride. In this way they are investing fewer dowries for marriage and parents who marry their son they are getting dowry, so they can start small business and can go abroad country to earn money. Tilak and dahej and peak marriage market in the age group of 12-16 year for girls and 14-18 for boy's fear of premarital sexual relations or defamation are the other causes of child marriage in the study area. The other causes of child marriage is labor demanded in the family, pressure from family members and relatives, religious practices and concept of daughters as liability/ burden were other factors contributing to child marriage in the study area. In the Nepali society, weak law enforcement is the main causes.

Child marriage is a gross violation of child's rights: it robs children of their childhood, hinders their growing up process and forces them into the dark abyss of an uncertain future. The impact of early/ child marriage include increased workload, school dropout among married girls, because they have to stay in husband's home, social custom are also not allowing married girls to go school.. Also, it has a negative effect on health in general and reproductive health in practical. Most of the respondents have married in early age and seven respondents have given birth to at least one child and three are in pregnancy period. After marriage they are getting more work load because they have to more tension and work load. 65% respondents are facing problem to mix up with friends or other family member after marriage. The finding shows after marriage most of the respondents health is not good. They are facing many problems like physically, mentally and other problems.

In our country, Nepal, girls still get married early and many start having children while they are

still in their teens. This is a threat to their health and their lives; maternal mortality is unacceptably high and the greatest danger is to the youngest women. Early marriage is a powerful disincentive to their educational opportunities; it is a threat to their reproductive health; and it is highly risky for both mother and child, for adolescent girls are physically, mentally and emotionally unprepared for childbirth. Our common aim should be to make it unacceptable in a social as well as a legal sense, to men as well as to women; and to promote actions that will enhance the physical and mental development of young girls and boys and their human rights as a whole. We want to promote an atmosphere in which couples are free to make choices, firmly grounded in maturity, and to wait until they are ready for marriage. Working together to change attitudes and legislation, improve data collection and promote education, we can achieve this goal.

Gita Mandal (pseudo name), aged 29

"I was in Grade 9 during my marriage. I did not want to get married so early, but wanted to continue my study. I tried to resist, but there was no option except agreeing with my parents' decision. At that time, my husband was studying in Grade 7. Even after my marriage, I wanted and tried to continue my study, but my husband said that it would be shameful for him, studying in Grade 7 and his wife in Grade 9. I even did not get support from my parents-in-laws, who were in favor of my husband. I do not blame my Prents-in-laws for this. There was poverty as well. Eventually, I decided to quit my will of studying further. But, I was motivated as I know the importance of education. So, I supported my husband, who passed SLC later. In addition, my husband was motivated and supported by his school teachers as well. I got pregnant I was scared because at that time I was not matured and I got operation during delivery and I also got jaundice. I thought all the problems due to early age marriage. Now, he has gone to aboard for employment. I have shifted my dreams on my children. I am sending my son and daughter to school to educate them.

A new-born baby is transferred into a human being through a family. So, the family plays direct roles in socialization of the baby. The baby learns the first lesson from family as to how to react in the society. Parents teach them to how to be well integrated and contributing members in the society. Regarding raising children, the family is the first and most influential setting for socialization. The family's economic condition and level of awareness affects in socialization of children. In Gita's case, it is social system that prohibits her to continue her education.

Kumari Sada Prevented from being a Victim of Child Marriage

Kumari Sada (Pseudo-Name) is a 14-year-old girl residing in Makhanpur Mushahari tole, ward no. 1, of Dhanusha Govindapur. When she was studying in class 9th grade in Shree Janata Ma. Vi. Dhanushadham, her parents started looking for a boy for her to get married to, and didn't allow her to continue her schooling despite her strong desire to pursue her education. When she didn't come to school for quite some time, the girls anti-child marriage committee of her school became worried and visited her home. There they came to know about her parents intention and motivated them to change their minds about marrying their daughter at such an early age and to let her continue her education by telling them about the negative consequences of early child marriage and the legal provision in country against such marriages. As a result, her parents dropped the idea of getting their daughter married and promised to let her continue her education in school. There are some hope that can change the socio-cultural structures.

Impacts of Early Child Marriage

Many of the respondents reported that Child age married respondents have faced many problems such as reproductive health problems, pregnancy problems, child rearing problems and child rearing problems. We cannot stand on our own our feet, not mental preparation, marry in early age is a legal crime, physical disturbance, domestic problems increase, economic problems. This study founds some insights child marriage means facing health problems such as reproductive health and mental health also. It inhibits all-round development, comparatively more hazardous and problematic. Literate female from Tarai community are not interested to take part in any program. They had old traditional believes and thought on early child marriage and made it as social values and norms. Due to which once their child cross 12 years of age they married their child.

Due to the early child marriage practices in Tarai many of the children become a mother in child. They lost their childhood, their right of health and education. They had to be discriminated. They faced domestic violence. Due to which maternal/child mortality become high. Only 2 respondents got married their sons after the age of 22 years. All of them expressed that they have to be done more work after the marriage than the before. Among married children 100% of children expressed that they could not able to play with friends as well as feel comfortable to meet around with friends and family members.

It was found that many of the girls become married early due to the girls. Many of the guardians were not discussed with their children before marriage due to perception of younger and old traditional culture. Many of the respondents had not married early and the reason behind that were inappropriate age, study may be disturbed may be sick, child born early in early married, mental power can't be developed.

The main impact of early child marriage include increased workload and school dropout among married girls due to the many causes and boys are facing different type of problem after marriage. Also, it has a negative effect on health in general and reproductive health in particular and mentally pressure. Tarai is the main part of Nepal where child marriage is still present than hilly area.

Early marriage of girls and boys impairs the realization and enjoyment of virtually every one of their rights. The imposition of a marriage partner on children or adolescents who are in no way ready for married life, and whose marriage will deprive them of freedom, opportunity for personal development, and other rights including health and well-being, education, and participation in civic life, nullifies the meaning of the CRC's core protections for those concerned. Unless measures are taken to address early marriage, it will continue to be a major stumbling block to the achievement of human rights. This Digest is intended merely as a starting-point, drawing attention to a practice that has been neglected by both women's and children's rights campaigners in recent decades. It is hoped that it will provide an incentive for a campaign to prevent early marriage and end the silent misery of millions of girls in many countries around the world, to open up new horizons for them, and contribute to the development of policies, programmes and advocacy to bring this about. It can be concluded that marriage is socially and culturally constructed.

CONCLUSION

In the Nepal society, with the majority of its population illiterate, ignorant and backward, age old traditions and customs are not easy to do away with. Only education and awareness among the people, especially in the rural areas, can make a difference. Unless people are made aware of the devastating multi-pronged effects of early marriage, they will not strive for its removal from the society. Therefore, a wide scale awareness campaign should be launched at the grass root level to gradually move public opinion against the practice.

To prevent further increase in early marriage rates, a range of political and programmatic actions is needed. Government and

local organizations need to work in conjunction to develop and implement suitable system to prevent or discourage the practice. Even though local organizations address the problem at grassroots level, greater changes must occur in terms of policy and program. By combining the input of young girls, counselors, policy makers, academics and others preventive measures can be ensure the decline of child marriages. " Ignorance plus early marriage " attitudes must be replaced by ideas promoting alternative lifestyles for children. Additionally, sexual education programs can address failing sexual and reproductive health of young teenage girls.

Continuous education and learning is essential for success. Girls especially, should be encouraged to stay in school and parents should recognize this need. Basic education provides personal, social and economic reasons for postponing marriage and encourages alternative life choices.

Viewing early marriage as potentially harmful traditional, strategies to halt the practice is needed, focusing on advocacy for later age at marriage. Workshops for community and religious leaders, women groups and others are suggested to expose the dangers of early marriage and promote children's rights.

To address psychological wellbeing of the children, community-based programs and more specifically women's groups can be available to provide services such as counseling, temporary shelter and food. Also important to providing information, education and communication materials regarding harmful traditional practices to communities to highlight the issue.

Not only are the above measures necessary to combat child marriage, but cultural beliefs too must be addressed to permanently abolish the practices. Cultural beliefs cannot be easily manipulated, however education can be provided to these societies bringing awareness about the harmful effects of early marriage on children.

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