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Early Marriage of Girls in Rukanpur Village, District of Nadia, West Bengal

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Abstract:

Early marriage is a type of problem which affects the society through illiteracy, over population, etc. Child marriage has grave implications for population control as adolescent brides are likely to have high fertility and a number of unwanted pregnancies. Child marriage is low among women who have had access to higher education and secondary education. Child marriage is still wide spread across the nation. In Nadia district early marriage is such a problem which is directly or indirectly related with the various aspect of the society i.e. education, economic, social etc.

Keywords: *Early marriage, illiteracy, population control, child marriage*

1. Introduction

Early marriage, defined as marriage before age 18, devastates the lives of girls, their families and their communities. Widespread in many developing countries, child brides number over 67 million worldwide. In some countries, more than half of the girls are married before they turn 18. Early marriage usually separates social phenomenon which are practiced in Rukanpur Village (code-0017) under Hoyalbaria Gram Panchayet of Nadia District, West Bengal. The young girls below eighteen are forced to be married by their families. The non working women populations are facing such a problem at their early age. Lack of education is also responsible for this early marriage. It has the negative impacts on women health and education.

2. Early marriage in Rukanpur Village

Early marriage most often occurs in poor, rural communities. In many regions, parents arrange their daughter's marriage unbeknownst to the girl. That can mean that one day, she may be at home playing with her siblings and the next, she's married off and sent to live in another village with her husband and his family – strangers, essentially. She is pulled out of school. She is separated from her peers. And once married, she is more likely to be a victim of domestic violence and suffer health complications associated with early sexual activity and childbearing. According to UNICEF's steps of the world's children 2009 report, 47% of Indian's women aged 20-24 were married before legal age of 18 with 56% in rural areas. According to 2001 census and the national family health survey a high rate of child marriage in the state. 39.16% compared to the national of 32.10% is revealed.

2.1. Income Structure

As per the 2011 Indian census Rukanpur Village has a population of 1211. Males constitute 52% of the population, and females 48%.

Income Group	% of Households
1000-4000	19
4000-8000	65
8000-12000	6
12000-16000	6
16000-20000	4

*Table 1: The income structure of Rukanpur Village, Nadia District
Source: Primary sample survey, 2014*

It is surveyed that a large percentage of household (65%) is shown under the income level Rs. 4000-8000 per month and the higher income level contains only 4% of the total households so that a poor economic infrastructure is revealed in this area for lack of industrial development and urbanization.

2.2. Educational Status

Educational Qualifications	Respondent in %
Illiterate	12.41
Literate	6.89
Primary	10.34
VI	3.44
VIII	6.89
Secondary	0
Higher Secondary	0

Table 2: Educational status of Rukanpur Village, Nadia District
Data Source: Primary sample survey, 2014

In Rukanpur Village the maximum percentage of surveyed populations are illiterate. Only 10% of populations are studied only primary level of education. The percentage of people having secondary education and higher education is nil. The educational status is poor in this village due to the lack of sound financial background.

According to primary sample survey only 26.66% of women are allowed for further studying and 73.33% women are not allowed for further studying in future. The main cause of early marriage is for traditional culture (65.33%). The early marriage is observed for girls population (below 18) is about 66.66%. In this village the dowry system is still viewed among the people (93.33%). Maximum number of surveyed population (73%) is engaged in primary sector (Agriculture labours) and they do not have their own land property.

2.3. Body Mass Index

BMI is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI is moderately correlated with more direct measures of body fat obtained from skin fold thickness measurements.

Sl. No.	Age (years)	Height (feet, inch)	Weight (Kgs)	BMI
1	32	4'11"	48	21.4
2	55	4'08"	55	27.2
3	25	4'11"	42	18.7
4	19	4'09"	40	18.8
5	35	4'08"	32	15.8
6	40	4'11"	38	16.9
7	60	5'00"	37	15.9
8	27	5'03"	45	17.6
9	24	5'02"	43	17.1
10	23	5'02"	38	16.9
11	37	5'00"	48	20.7
12	38	5'11"	57	17.5
13	65	4'02"	40	24.8
14	20	4'11"	40	17.8
15	45	4'11"	38	16.9
16	60	5'00"	40	17.2
17	27	5'03"	56	21.9
18	22	5'00"	32	16.4
19	27	5'02"	47	19.0
20	38	5'01"	46	19.2
21	35	5'01"	46	18.0
22	30	5'03"	40	21.9
23	21	5'00"	38	16.4
24	27	5'02"	56	19.0
25	38	5'01"	46	19.2
26	35	5'03"	46	18.0
27	18	4'01"	41	18.9
28	32	4'01"	42	19.3
29	25	5'03"	35	13.7

Table 3: Body Mass Index in Rukanpur Village
Data Source: Primary Sample Survey, 2014

For adults 20 years old and older, BMI is interpreted using standard weight status categories. These categories are the same for men and women of all body types and ages.

The standard weight status categories associated with BMI ranges for adults are shown in the following table.

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal or Healthy Weight
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

Table 4: Standard Weight Categories
Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

In Rukanpur Village 60% of women population are observed under weight as their BMI is below 18.5 and 44% of women population contains normal or healthy weight. This is because of poor economic condition of the family.

2.4. Consequences

1. Its consequences only perpetuate the cycle of poverty. More often than not, child brides are pulled out of school, depriving them of an education and meaningful work. They suffer health risks associated with early sexual activity and childbearing, leading to high rates of maternal and child mortality as well as sexually transmitted infections and they are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and social isolation.
2. Girls younger than 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s. Pregnancy is consistently among the leading causes of death for girls ages 15 to 19.
3. Child brides face a higher risk of contracting HIV because they often marry an older man with more sexual experience.
4. In Rukanpur Village the incidence of physical torture is viewed to 83.33% (surveyed population) and the decision of women is neglected for family planning (66.66% of surveyed population).

2.5. Remedies

Though early marriage is entrenched in tradition and culture, change is possible. Very often, girls and their parents want to delay marriage but lack options. Governments and communities are actively working to discourage the practice by raising awareness of the adverse consequences for girls, running programs that provide girls with viable alternatives to marriage, and demanding more effective enforcement of existing laws that condemn child marriage. The major percentage of population in Rukanpur Village does not have their own land so that a particular amount of land should be provided in each family for economic benefits. The self-employment programme should be introduced. Health benefit programmes should be introduced. Both Government and NGO's should arrange the awareness programmes regarding the negative effects of early marriage and young motherhood.

3. Conclusion

Early marriage of girl's 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. The study reveals the poor economic background of this village. Maximum number of population is working as agricultural and brick field labourer. The educational status is very poor due to the strong financial support and this situation increases the fertility rate. Besides malnutrition is observed among the girl population

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