

## United Nations Population Fund Assists Victims of Child Marriage in Jordan through Vocational Services

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava\* and Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu, India

Child marriage is a global public health concern, which deprives the child of their childhood, education, health, aspirations and pushes them into a grim future [1,2]. The available global estimates suggest that in the current decade in excess of 140 million girls will be coerced to become child brides, which is quite alarming [1]. A wide range of factors have been identified which either in isolation or in combination predisposes child marriages, such as poor educational status of the parents, low socioeconomic status, rampant practice of dowry in many communities, cultural traditions and either complete absence or loopholes in the existing laws that permit child marriages [1,2]. In addition, the presence of factors like religious and social pressures, customs in local community, apprehension that the girl will remain unmarried forever and the general belief that women cannot earn money and they have to just take care of the families, so why there is a need to educate them or delay their marriage [1,2].

This social menace predisposes them to intimate partner violence, different forms of abuse, early conception and associated complications of pregnancy and childbirth and makes them totally dependent on their spouse [1-3]. Further, despite many untoward sequels of child marriage, not much progress has been made towards ending the practice, instead the problem is expected to augment further owing to the expansion of the youth population in the low and middle income nations [1,3].

Similar to other developing nations, Jordan also reports an increase in the rates of child marriages by 2.1% in the five year period between 2011 and 2016 [4]. In-fact, the available figures depict that a significant proportion of young girls drop out of their schools and before they can comprehend, they are married either due to poverty or because of the family or cultural traditions [2,4]. This is followed by the imposition of restrictions (like what to wear, not to go out, etc.), violence, forced to become pregnant and very soon they acquire the responsibility of

ensuring the survival of their own child, while they aren't fit to take care of themselves [2,3]. Such situations are quite common and the problem is becoming even worse [1,4].

In order to support the vulnerable women and girls, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has initiated vocational training programs to make them independent and become self-employed [3,4]. These girls are trained in their areas of interest and counselled to become confident and motivated to transform their hobbies into a career [4]. In addition, in collaboration with the local agency, the UNFPA has developed a Hotline to extend free legal aid and counselling services to assist the women and girls in need [4]. These women are nurtured to become self-reliant and made to believe that they are not responsible for their current situation and that it is not the end of their lives, but a new beginning and we all are there to help you all in your new venture [1,2,4].

To conclude, the problem of child marriage is a complex issue and is extremely prevalent in rural and underprivileged settings with limited future prospects. It is high time that measures are implemented at the grass-root level and that provision of timely and adequate support can save lives of the affected girls and women.

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\*Corresponding author: Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu, India, Tel: 919884227224; Email: [drshrishri2008@gmail.com](mailto:drshrishri2008@gmail.com)

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