

Rights groups demand immediate amendment in the draft Child Marriage Prevention Act 2016

Allowing marriage of girls less than 18 years of age will make adolescent girls more vulnerable to Child Marriage

Dhaka, 03 December 2016. Today in a human chain and rally, a group of 22 rights based organizations demanded immediate amendment of the proposed Child Marriage prevention Law 2016 which has been recently approved in the cabinet meeting. This draft law keeps the legal age for marriage for girls at 18 years but lowering it to 16 years under 'special circumstances'.

The human chain and rally titled 'the special provision of the law on child marriage prevention will increase the risk of child marriage. Amend the provision immediately' was moderated by Mustafa Kamal Akanda of COAST Trust. Ferdous Ara Rume of COAST Trust presented position of the organizers. Zayed Iqbal Khan of Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Subal Sarkar of Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity, Aminur Rasul Babul of Unnyan Dhara Trust and Sanat Kumar Bhowmik of COAST Trust also spoke at the occasion.

On behalf of the organizers Ferdous Ara Rume expressed concern that, culprits can abuse this law. Allowing marriage under 18 under special circumstances i.e. if parents are allowed to arrange marriage of girl under 18 with the legal permission, it will definitely increase child marriage. The present law can't prevent child marriage even it doesn't allow girls' marriage under 18, if law allows marriage under 18 it will make the situation worst. This will make girls more vulnerable to child marriage for sure.

Sanat Kumar Bhowmik said, we are concerned since this proposed law could be easily abused. A rapist can legalize his crime by marrying the victim adolescent girl. We demand immediate amendment to protect our adolescent girls from these types of crimes.

Subal Sarkar said, a girl under 18 is not physically matured and thus marriage of a girl under 18 can definitely cause serious threat to her life, it creates many physical problems and it also leads to birth of immature babies or malnourished babies.

Zayed Iqbal Khan said, besides many physical problems, child marriage creates hindrance towards girls' education. One of the major causes of girls' dropout from school is this child marriage. We must have strong law to prevent marriage under 18 years of age to protect our adolescents girls.

Aminur Rasul Babul Said, one of the major causes of children malnutrition is the early marriage. It is almost impossible to give birth to a matured and child with good health for a mother suffering from malnutrition. A mother with physical and mental immaturity can't give birth to healthy child. Early marriage also increases maternal and infant mortality. That is why we must have legal protection against early marriage.

News sender: Mustafa Kamal Akanda, 01711455591, Ferdous Ara Rume, 01713328810