The Contribution of Civil Registration for the Ending of Child Marriage

Kendra Gregson
UNICEF Regional Advisor, Child Protection
Outline

- What is child marriage
- Civil registration as a protective mechanism
- Potential uses of civil registration to end child marriage
Child marriage is the marriage or union of two people where one party is under the age of 18.
## Minimum Age of Marriage in South Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Girls with parental consent/court approval</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Boys with parental consent/court approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No minimum</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>No minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu marriages</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No minimum for Muslim marriages</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No minimum for Muslim marriages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Marriage Risks

- Health of the mother due to early child bearing
- Higher rate of maternal mortality
- Increased health risks to child
- Higher rate of infant mortality
- Higher likelihood not to complete secondary school
- Negative impact on earning potential
- Child bride more likely to be victim to domestic violence
- Social isolation
- High economic costs for country and global economy
The prevalence of child marriage in South Asia could more than halve by 2030 if progress is accelerated.
## Strategies to End Child Marriage

### Enhanced voice and agency of adolescent girls and boys in South Asian countries

- **Empowerment of girls & boys**
  - Enhanced knowledge, skills, attitudes and capacities, to make informed choices and decide on their relationships

- **Family and Community Engagement:**
  - Boys, men, mothers, fathers, religious leaders demonstrate more gender-equitable attitudes and support for girls and boys rights contributing to social norm change

### Enhanced resources & opportunities for adolescent girls and boys and their families in South Asia

- **System Strengthening:**
  - Capacity of education, health, CP, systems to deliver integrated and coordinated quality programmes and services for adolescents and their families

- **Economic Empowerment:**
  - Increased capacity of economic and social protection programmes and services to provide adolescents and their families with life options and alternatives

### Enhanced legal & political response to prevent child marriage & to support married, divorced or widowed adolescent girls and boys at risk or married

- **Laws and Policies:**
  - Capacity of government to implement policies and interventions to end child marriage

- **Data and Evidence:**
  - Generate and use evidence to inform policy, programme design and monitor progress

---

Enhanced resources & opportunities for adolescent girls and boys and their families in South Asia

- **System Strengthening:**
  - Capacity of education, health, CP, systems to deliver integrated and coordinated quality programmes and services for adolescents and their families

- **Economic Empowerment:**
  - Increased capacity of economic and social protection programmes and services to provide adolescents and their families with life options and alternatives

- **Data and Evidence:**
  - Generate and use evidence to inform policy, programme design and monitor progress

---

Enhanced voice and agency of adolescent girls and boys in South Asian countries

- **Empowerment of girls & boys**
  - Enhanced knowledge, skills, attitudes and capacities, to make informed choices and decide on their relationships

- **Family and Community Engagement:**
  - Boys, men, mothers, fathers, religious leaders demonstrate more gender-equitable attitudes and support for girls and boys rights contributing to social norm change

---

Enhanced legal & political response to prevent child marriage & to support married, divorced or widowed adolescent girls and boys at risk or married

- **Laws and Policies:**
  - Capacity of government to implement policies and interventions to end child marriage

- **Data and Evidence:**
  - Generate and use evidence to inform policy, programme design and monitor progress

---

Enhanced resources & opportunities for adolescent girls and boys and their families in South Asia

- **System Strengthening:**
  - Capacity of education, health, CP, systems to deliver integrated and coordinated quality programmes and services for adolescents and their families

- **Economic Empowerment:**
  - Increased capacity of economic and social protection programmes and services to provide adolescents and their families with life options and alternatives

- **Data and Evidence:**
  - Generate and use evidence to inform policy, programme design and monitor progress
Civil registration provides evidence of a vital event
Legal Certificate

Is the vital record that documents the birth of a child.

It should contain the minimum information.

The base material should be a security substrate image using secure printing techniques and a unique identifier.
Birth registration determines a person’s age
Percentage of children under age five whose births are registered, South Asia

*Data which is final and published but has not yet been confirmed through the SDG country consultation exercise for SDG indicator 16.9.1
**More recent data from MICS 2019 will be published soon and these data are included in the upcoming global UNICEF report
Marriage registration can be a requirement:

- for birth registration
- to obtain travel documents
Showing a birth certificate before marriage is a good policy practice.

Birth and marriage registration can be required for annulment.
Vital Statistics

❖ Trends
❖ Policy changes
❖ SDG monitoring

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18, South Asia

Note: Countries with an asterisk (*) display data which is final and published but has not yet been confirmed through the SDG country consultation exercise for SDG indicator 5.3.1.
THANK YOU