

## Child Marriage

*"There is no reason, there is no excuse,  
Child marriage is Child Abuse."*

### Definition of Child Marriage

Any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age. Whilst in actuality it impacts both boys and girls, girls are disproportionately the most affected. Any marriage that takes place below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing is considered as a child marriage.



## Impacts of Child Marriage

### Violence

Child marriage is a form of violence as well as a predictor of multiple other forms of violence – sexual, physical, economic and emotional. Due to the power dynamics and the age difference, women and girls married before the age of 18 are more likely to face domestic violence from their intimate partners throughout their life.



Limited access to education and livelihood opportunities also place girls at higher risk of violence, poverty, exclusion and exploitation.

Child marriage does limit a girl's access to education and livelihood opportunities for a variety of reasons including: having limited control over her own life; restricted freedom of movement; having a baby at a child age; domestic and care work responsibilities; and so forth. Moreover, less income generating opportunities combined with the economic responsibilities of marriage and child rearing can place heavy burdens on the child and her family leading to poverty.



### Health

Child marriage has severe health consequences for girls due to sexual activity at a young age before reaching physical maturity and limited access to and knowledge on reproductive health services and information respectively.

It is notable that:

Pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality in 15-19 year old girls, and girls age 15 years or under are five times more likely to die than those over (1).

Also, the infants of adolescent mothers are 50% more likely to die during their first year of life than those born to mothers in their twenties.

<sup>1</sup> IPPF & UNFPA . Ending Child Marriage: A Guide for Global Policy Action. London : International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, Danielle."To Protect Her Honour" - Child Marriage in Emergencies - The fatal confusion between protecting girls and sexual violence. s.l. : Care International UK, 2015