

Majority Of Child Marriage Victims Face Health Risk Due To Unexpected Sexual Violence, Abuse, Says Study

MINOR PERILS, A MAJOR PROBLEM

VOICES



“Awareness among the people on child marriage has led to more cases being reported nowadays. Even though an Act regarding child marriage is in place, the social evil is still prevalent in the society. The offenders are let off with fines. The punishment should be severe as per the Act to stop the child marriages.”

T. Jayanthi, ADVOCATE, FORMER MEMBER OF STATE COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS (SCPCR)



“If the financial assistance given to the girls completing 10th and 12th standards were increased, it will encourage more parents to allow their

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A MAJORITY of minor girls forced into marriages in the state have developed serious health issues due to early pregnancy and excessive physical torment experienced at a tender age, revealed a study.

The study conducted by the Campaign to End Child Marriages in Tamil Nadu (CECM-TN) also showed that most of the victims had to face unexpected incidents of sexual violence and abuse. Besides, 88% of the girls complained of deteriorating health after marriage. The frequent abuses have pushed some of the girls into depression. The study pointed out that 25% of the victims were depressed and 47% of them felt lonely due to the severe abuse and violence.

Most of the child brides went through nightmares throughout their pregnancy till the childbirth. The study showed that the mother and baby were healthy only in 21% of child marriages.

The survey was carried out on five heads - health, education, social, economic and violence.

“Child marriages take a toll on the health of minor girls and pour cold water over her dreams of pursuing education. They are forced to become accustomed to daily household chores,” said state convener of CECM MSA Satish Babu from Namakkal district.

Meanwhile, the study highlighted that the cases of separation among the couples involving a child bride were very low. “In spite of these issues, only 16% of such marriages led to break-ups and 6% of them ended up in divorce,” said state convener Radha Damodaram.

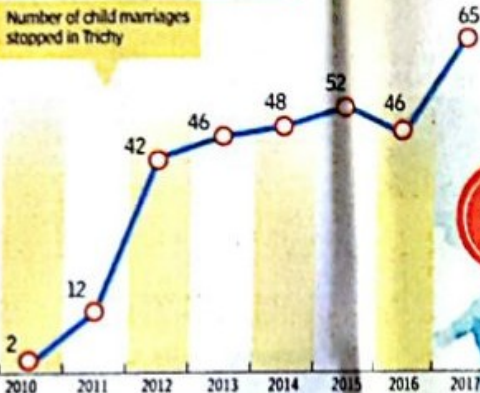
Advocate Suhanya, who was a resource person in Wednesday's meeting in Trichy, said poverty, worry over dowry, ignorance about the health complications of early marriage and concern over the safety of the girl are the major reasons for child marriages.

Many parents marry off their daughters young because they feel it is in her best interest, often to ensure her safety in areas where girls are at high risk of harassment and physical or sexual assault.

CECM also pointed out the lack of a state-level survey about child marriages in Tamil Nadu and also the fruitless functioning of

DISTURBING TREND

Number of child marriages stopped in Trichy



The frequent abuses have pushed some of the girls into depression

THE COLD HARD FACTS

► CECM says that the child marriages in rural areas account for 56% of the total incidences

► Poor economical background, dowry, concern over safety of girl children, fear over likely love marriage of girls with other community men remain major factors

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CECM-TN

► Tamil Nadu government should devise work plan on ending child marriages and involve NGOs into the effort to closely monitor the incidences.

► The government should ensure that the girls have access to crucial services like education, health and justice.

65 child marriages stopped in Trichy in 2017



Times News Network

Child marriages continued to be a menace plaguing empowerment of women in Trichy despite the efforts to sensitise the people about the consequences of the social evil. The district social welfare office of Trichy

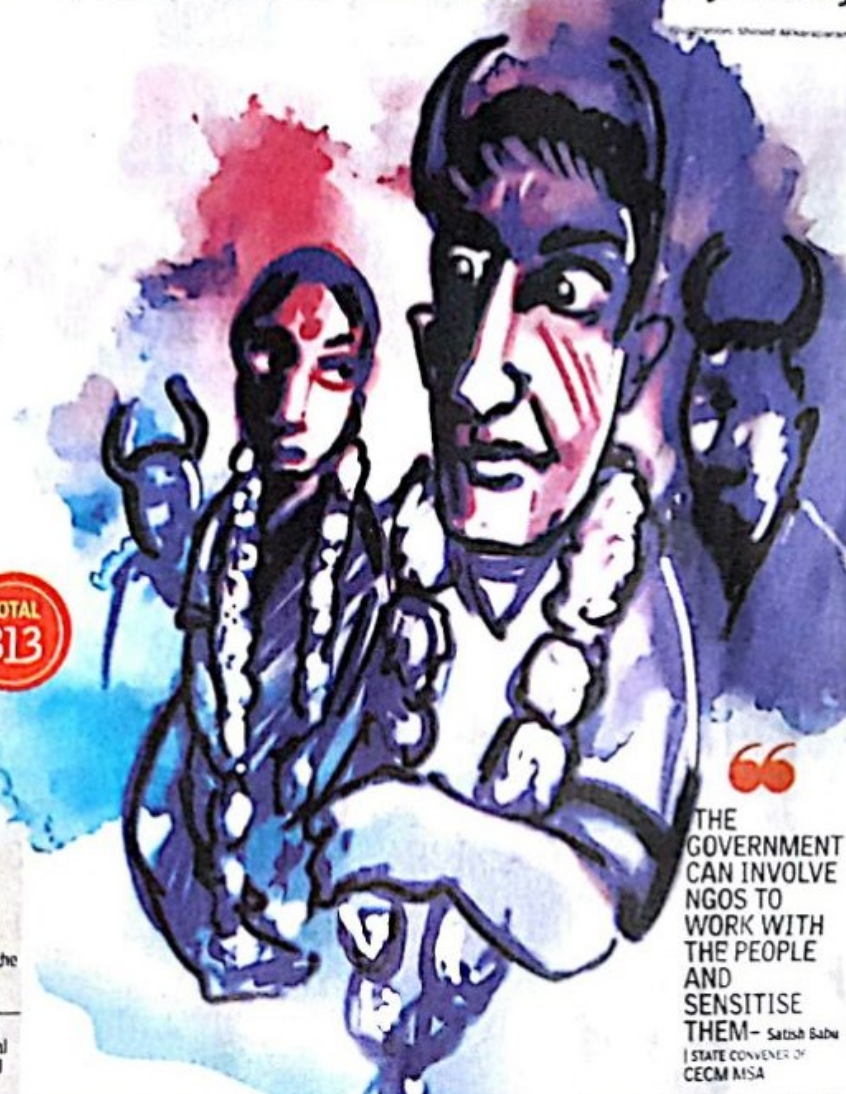
team prevented another 16 such marriages here. It may be pointed out that the district had 46 child marriages stopped in 2016. The number was almost same from 2012. The incidences of child marriages came to light through a word of information passed either by the bride's friends or neighbors. In

the district social welfare office. Child marriages were reported from almost all the areas of the district, particularly from Manapparai, Musiri, Thuraiyur and Thottiyam. The awareness programs helped us in stopping a good number of such marriages in the dis-

(DSWO) S. S. Sha

The awareness programs of the government department seemed to have made an impact on the mindset of the people to report about such incidents.

Upon doing the worrying trend, Trichy district administration had started keeping track of the girls



“THE GOVERNMENT CAN INVOLVE NGOS TO WORK WITH THE PEOPLE AND SENSITISE THEM” - Satish Babu | STATE CONVENER OF CECM MSA