

Research Report
On
The Status of Child Marriage
And Impact Upon Girls



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
National Child Rights Council
August 2021

Publisher



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens

NATIONAL CHILD RIGHTS COUNCIL

Pulchowk, Lalitpur

Copies:

Publication Date: August, 2021

Advisor: Milan Raj Dharel, Executive Director

Research Team: Aatmaram Thapa, Chief, Research and Training Section
Sajana Kunwar, Program Officer, Research and Training Section

Press:

Ashmi Printing Press, Sankhamul, Kathmandu



Government of Nepal
MINISTRY OF WOMEN, CHILDREN & SENIOR CITIZEN



Singhadarbar, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel. : 00977-1- 4200164 / 4200168
4200082 / 4200413 / 4200408
Fax : 4200116
E-mail : info@mowcsc.gov.np
media@mowcsc.gov.np
Website : www.mowcsc.gov.np

Message

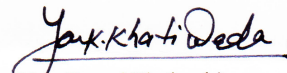
Government of Nepal has established National Child Rights Council (NCRC) under the Act Relating to Children, 2018 for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child. From the very beginning of its establishment in the close coordination with Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, it is actively working for policy advisory, capacity enhancement and national child rights and child protection system strengthening. Further, it is robustly engaging in policy and programs to establish it as a national center for child rights resources. It is very encouraging to know that NCRC is going to publish a research report titled **National study on the Status of Child Marriage and Impact of Void Marriage upon Girls** in order to support in designing effective and efficient program to reduce the incidence of CEFM and impact of void marriage upon girls. I am confident that this report will be helpful for three tiers of government including all concerned agencies to develop evidence-based plan and programs for addressing issues of CEFM.

Nepal is committed to end Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) by adopting constitutional, legal, policy and program measures. For the practical and effective implementation of global, international, regional and national commitments of Nepal for reducing and ending CEFM, it is necessary to generate, manage and transfer knowledge regarding the prevalence, triggering factors, vulnerable communities, adverse impact of CEFM. With recognizing these urgencies, the research commissioned by NCRC is encouraging initiation for the fulfilment of Nepal's target to end CEFM by 2030. The report reveals that the incidence of CEFM is still significantly prevail in Nepal but in decreasing, diversified and under reported form. For the prompt response to the incidence of CEFM, the role of law enforcement agencies is vital. Vulnerable communities for CEFM are to support with community friendly program. The risk factors associated with CEFM as the report identified, are to address by three tiers of government. The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens is committed to coordinate and collaborate with all responsible and concern stakeholders for this ends.

Finally, my special thanks go to the Research and Training Section and entire team of NCRC for undertaking the great initiation by commissioning and publishing the research report which will ultimately help policy makers, implementers, practitioners, and scholars seeking an understanding of the status, high risk factors, adverse impact and the interventions to reduce the CEFM in Nepal.

Congratulations and best wishes for the future endeavor.

Thank You !!!


(Yam Kumari Khatiwada)
Secretary



नेपाल सरकार

महिला, बालबालिका तथा ज्येष्ठ नागरिक मन्त्रालय
राष्ट्रिय बाल अधिकार परिषद
National Child Rights Council-NCRC

श्रीमहल, पल्चोक, ललितपुर



पत्र संख्या :

चलानी नं. :

Acknowledgement

National Child Rights Council (NCRC) is specialized national agency of Government of Nepal on Child Rights. It works to protect and promote rights of children in Nepal. The council is mandated for building capacities of child rights agencies and government authorities, promote national child rights campaigns, provide policy advice, operate child protection services and serve as child right resource center. It has prioritized the work for knowledge generation, knowledge management and knowledge transfer. For making this vision operational, it has formulated Research Sub Committee under the Council to lead and coordinate knowledge generation activities and established Research and Training Section to implement the activities, interventions and programs related to knowledge generation, management and transfer.


With expectation to contribute in knowledge generation, NCRC has been commissioning research on the different issues of child rights. The current study, commissioned by NCRC, on *the status of Child, Early and Forced Marriages (CEFM) and impact of void marriage upon the girls* is an initiation to understand the dynamics of CEFM and provide broader and specific recommendations to end CEFM in Nepal.

It is our pleasure to publish this research report titled "**A National Study on the status of Child Marriage and Impact of Void Marriage upon Girls**". Since Nepal is committed to end the CEFM by 2030, the current study is expected to contribute for designing effective and efficient programs to reduce CEFM and its adverse impacts. It is further anticipated that the report will provide evidences that enables policy makers and implementers for making right decisions and the effective actions to end CEFM. Additionally, it will be a reliable reference for the researcher and the advocates who engage in different works related to ending and reducing CEFM.

The research highlights that the incidence of CEFM is still significantly prevail in Nepal but in decreasing trend. It also informs that the pattern of CEFM is diversified and underreported in communities. The research identified number of risk factors (personal and socio-economic) that has correlation with the practice of CEFM. It reports about the perceived adverse impacts on physical and mental health, social lives and legal rights of children. Further, the study has recommendations at policy level, implementation level and service delivery and program development level.

My sincere thanks go to members of Research Sub Committee of NCRC for endorsing the research protocol and continuous guidance during the research process. I thank Prof. Chandrakala Sharma, Mrs. Bimala Gyawali and Mr. Tarak Dhital for providing their valuable inputs upon the draft report. I am special thankful to Mr. Atmaram Thapa and Mrs. Sajana Kunwar for their tireless effort throughout the research process and smooth implementation of research protocol. I like to thank Plan International Nepal for collaborating with NCRC for carrying out the research and publication of research

On behalf of NCRC, I would like to request for constructive feedback to strengthen NCRC efforts in coming days.


.....
(Milan Raj Dharel)

Executive Director

“विपद्मा बाल अधिकारको सुनिश्चितता: हामी सबैको साझा प्रतिबद्धता”

फोन नं. : ०१-५५५०१२१, ५५५०१४७
Tel. : 01-5550121, 5550147

फ्याक्स : ९७७-१-५५२७५९१
Fax : 977-1-5527591

E-mail : contact@ncrc.gov.np
Website : www.ncrc.gov.np
E-Portal : www.childrights.gov.np

Acronyms

AD	:	Anno Domini
CEFM	:	Child Early Force Marriage
CM	:	Child Marriage
CRC	:	Child Right Convention
CSE	:	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	:	Female Genital Mutilation
FY	:	Fiscal Year
HRC	:	UN Human Rights Council
IGA	:	Income Generation Activities
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
LL	:	Local Level
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	:	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NCRC	:	National Child Right Council
NDHS	:	Nepal Demographic Health Survey
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organization
NMICS	:	Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster survey
RM	:	Rural Municipality
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAIEVAC	:	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	:	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Executive Summary

CEFM is widely recognized within international and national agreements as a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls, preventing them from living their lives free from all forms of violence. It threatens the lives and futures of girls and women, robbing them of their agency to make decisions about their lives, disrupting their education, making them more vulnerable to violence, discrimination and abuse, and preventing their full participation in economic, political and social spheres. Nepal is committed to end CEFM by adopting constitutional, legal, policy and programmatic measures. However, a tangible result in ending CEFM is still to realize. In this context, the current study commissioned by NCRC is aiming to design effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM and its adverse impact upon girls. For this purpose, both analytical as well as descriptive research designs were used and qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed accordingly. In-depth descriptive information about the 12 cases of void marriage registered in police office of Province 1, Bagmati and Sudurpaschim province were collected, organized, interpreted, and presented in a narrative format. A total of 18 FGDs and 38 KIIs were carried out in all seven provinces comprising provincial and local government leaders and law enforcement agencies, NGO practitioners, activists and child club graduates and child club members. A total of 604 officials from 604 local levels were surveyed to identify the prevalence, triggering factors, consequences of CEFM upon the young couples. The draft research report was consulted with independent experts, members of Research Sub Committee and concern stakeholders.

The incidence of CEFM is still widely prevails in Nepal but in decreasing form. The survey with 604 local levels reveals that a total of 4656 incidence of CEFM was observed in 268 local levels till April 2021. The majority of the respondents of FGDs and KIIs (89%) reported that the incidence of CEFM is still significant in Nepal. The number of incidences observed in 268 local levels in FY 2020/21 is lesser by 1486 than of FY 2019/20 that is 6142. The FY 2020/21 is marked with the decreasing of 24% cases of CEFM in comparison to FY 2019/20. It is found that all the provinces are marked with decreasing trend except Gandaki province.

The research finds that the most of cases of CEFM goes under reported. Survey with local levels shows that out of 4656 cases of CEFM incidence observed in FY 2020/21, only 382 (8%) cases are reported to concern agencies for legal actions. The incidences of CEFM are under reported because of social ignorance, avoidance of social conflict, less practice of punitive action, limited knowledge among law enforcement agencies about their roles and responsibilities, family members themselves are engaged in committing the offense and thus are liable to punishment and girls are generally unwilling to seek legal remedies.

There is wider prevalence of CEFM incidence in terms of ecological region, caste, economic status, education level and socio-cultural context. Majority of the respondents believed that the cases of CEFM arranged by parents have significantly decreased as parents have become more aware on the negative consequences of child marriage despite few cases in Terai belt of Nepal. Almost all the child respondents of FGD stated that the current status of CEFM is marked by the more cases of elopement. More than one fourth respondents of FGD and KII mentioned that the practices of marriage are under cover by relocation within and outside the country (mostly India) and adopting hiding strategies. It is practiced when parents and other family members are not in support of marriage.

The study finds that out of 268 local levels who observed the incidences of CEFM, 79 (29%) are municipalities and 189 (71%) are rural municipalities. This signifies that larger communities who observed the incidence of CEFM are rural. More than half of the respondents of FGD and KII (especially child respondents) revealed that the social perception against adolescence love is the biggest reason to increase CEFM. More than one fourth of the respondents reported that young adolescents are increasingly likely to choose their own partner so the parents have a fear if their daughters eloped with lower caste, ethnicity and with a boy or a man of low social status. They have a fear of unintended pregnancy as the matter of shame for bringing dishonor on their family.

The socio-economic, legal, and technological factors collectively promote CEFM. As reported by the respondents, socio-cultural factors associated with CEFM are social perception and practice against adolescence relations and girl's mobility, social acceptance of child marriage, social ignorance, child separation as a strategy to reduce the risk of CEFM, risk of inter-caste marriage, domestic violence, controlling girls freedom to choose partners, son preference culture, family dispute and quarrelsome, lack of quality parenting, under age pregnancy and school drop-out status. Legal factors associated with CEFM are less practice of punitive action against CEFM, ignorance of CEFM by law enforcement agencies and ignorance of law and consequence on CEFM. Likewise, unsafe use of social media is identified as technological factors of CEFM. Perceiving CEFM as a solution to reducing household expenses, inadequate household facilities and burden of dowry are reported as economic factors associated with CEFM.

Research finds that CEFM has three different adverse effects on young couples varied in boys and girls-they are effect on physical and mental health, social lives and the enjoyment of legal rights. As the respondent perceived, complexities in pregnancy, early motherhood, high risk of uterus prolapsed, possibilities of multiple abortion and miscarriage, low birth weight of new born baby, mental stress and high risk of suicidal tendency are adverse impact of

CEFM in physical and mental health. For girls, every pregnancy leads to high risks, including death during delivery and jeopardizes the health of these young mothers and their babies. Teenage girls are more susceptible than mature women to sexually transmitted disease. The adverse effects of CEFM on social lives as reported by the respondents are high risk of early separation, disturbed marital relation, family disputes and quarrelsome, risk of losing personal freedom and dignity, risk of engaging in child labor, risk of polygyny, lack of understanding between husband and wife and risk of drop out from school education. The adverse effect of CEFM on the enjoyment of legal rights as perceived by the respondents are hindering rights to identity and birth registration, false allegations and deprived from state facilities.

This research uncovers that the denial of marriage freedom leads to CEFM. Such freedoms are reflected in the rights to choose and not to choose the life partner, rights to choose marriage process and rights to choose the time for marriage conclusion. Similarly, the practice of CEFM weakens the sexual and reproductive health rights of young girls and women. When women and girls marry at young age, their sovereignty to sexual and reproductive rights become weak and fell under triple jeopardy. Likewise, economic freedom and opportunities of household and CEFM are proportionally related to each other. It further discusses that the promotion of democratic norms and values in Nepalese family can prevent CEFM. Despite a constitutional and legal commitment to end the practice of CEFM in Nepal, it is realized that there is difficulties in legal enforcement which hinders the enjoyment of legal rights. To report, response and reduce the incidence and effects of CEFM, this study has recommended for strengthening child rights and child protection system at all level of governance by adopting policy, institutional and programmatic measures enshrined in the Act Relating to Children, 2018. Further, the study suggests for formulation of strategies and costed action plan and its effective implementation in province and local levels to end CEFM. Similarly, the study has recommended for promoting sexual and reproductive health rights of young couples through varied adolescent centric interventions. It has further recommended for expansion of economic freedom and freedom of opportunities in household. Finally, the study recommended for developing democratic norms and values in the family to reduce the incidence of CEFM and its adverse effect on young couples.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1	Context.....	1
1.2	International Human Rights Instruments on CEFM.....	4
1.3	National Legal and Policy Framework.....	6
1.4	Prevalence of CEFM in Nepal.....	14
1.5	Rational of the Study.....	17

Chapter 2

Objectives and Methodology

2.1	Overarching Goal of the Study.....	19
2.2	Research Objectives.....	19
2.3	Research Questions.....	19
2.4	Research Design.....	19
2.5	Sampling Design.....	19
2.6	Methods of Data Collection.....	20
2.7	Data Analysis and Presentation.....	22
2.8	Scope and limitation of the study.....	22
2.9	Ethical Considerations.....	22

Chapter 3

Findings

3.1	Status of CEFM Incidence.....	23
3.1.1	Cases of CEFM.....	23
3.1.2	Current Trend of CEFM.....	24

3.1.3 Reporting of Incidence of CEFM.....	26
3.1.4 Wider Prevalence of CEFM Incidence.....	27
3.2 Contributing factors of CEFM.....	28
3.2.1 CEFM arranged by Parents.....	28
3.2.2 Self Initiated Marriage.....	29
3.3 High Risk Communities for CEFM.....	30
3.4 Major Risk Factors of CEFM.....	32
3.5 Perceived Adverse Effect of CEFM and Void Marriage upon Girls.....	36
3.6 Preventive Measures:.....	44

Chapter 4

Discourse on Child Early and Forced Marriage.....	49
---	----

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion.....	55
5.2 Recommendations.....	58

References

Tables

Table No. 1 Key Human Rights Instruments.....	4
Table No.2 Goal of SDGs linked to CEFM.....	11
Table No.3 Detail of Participants in FGD.....	20
Table No.4 Detail of Participants in KII.....	21
Table No.5 Details of Surveyed Local Levels.....	21
Table No. 6 Province wise Cases of CEFM, 2021.....	24
Table No.7 Province wise Cases of CEFM in 2019/ 20 & 2020/2021.....	25
Table No.8 Number of CEFM Incidence and Reporting.....	26
Table No. 9 Understanding of Different Effects Among Girls and Boys.....	43
Table No. 10 Preventive Measures of CM.....	46

Boxes

Box No. 1 Hiding Strategies of CEFM Incidences.....	30
Box No. 2 High Risk Communities for CEFM Incidences.....	31
Box No.3 Major Risk Factors of CEFM.....	35
Box No.4 Perceived Adverse Effects of CEFM.....	37
Box No. 5 Preventive Measures.....	43

Annex

Guiding questions for FGD.....	62
Guiding questions for KII.....	64
Content analysis of void marriage cases.....	66
Survey questions for local level.....	66
Table of survey response.....	66

CHAPTER-1

Introduction

1.1 Context

Marriage is a legally and socially sanctioned union usually between a man and woman that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords the status of their offspring. It is primary social institution based on free and full consent of entering partners. International human rights treaties guarantee the right of all individuals to enter into marriage with the free and full consent of both parties. In the context of Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM), it lacks free informed and full consent of both parties and lacks legal background.

“Child marriage” is a marriage in which at least one of the parties is a child. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 a child is “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. So, child marriage is any formal or informal union or marriage between two people where one or both of the spouses are under the age of 18.

“Early marriage” is often used interchangeably with “child marriage” and refers to marriages involving a person aged below 18 in countries where the age of majority is attained earlier or upon marriage. Early marriage can also refer to marriages where both spouses are 18 or older but other factors make them unready to consent to marriage, such as their level of physical, emotional, sexual and psychosocial development, or a lack of information regarding the person’s life options.

A forced marriage is any marriage which occurs without the full and free consent of one or both of the parties and/or where one or both of the parties is/are unable to end or leave the marriage, including as a result of duress or intense social or family pressure.

Child and early marriage are associated with the minimum legal age of marriage. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 precludes State parties from permitting or giving validity to a marriage between persons who have not attained their majority. In the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." Notwithstanding this definition, the Committee on the Rights of Child considers that the minimum age for marriage must be 18 years for both men and women.

Since, the Currently, legislation in 147 countries contains exceptions permitting the marriage of children below the age of 18 and, even where legislation is in line with international standards, the prohibition of child and forced marriage is difficult to implement owing to a number of the challenges discussed above, including cultural attitudes supporting the practice. (A/HRC/26/22 Para 52.)

Nepal is a state party to UNCRC. The National Civil (Code) Act, 2017 defines marriage is legally defined as a permanent, inviolable and holy social and legal bond, which is based on free consent of the persons getting married and established to start conjugal and family life between a man and a woman. It guarantees the people's freedom to conclude a marriage, establish a family and spend a conjugal life. However, the section 173 of The Penal Code 2017 prohibits of concluding child marriage unless parties to the marriage have attained twenty years of age. Such type of marriage shall, ipso facto, be void. If a person who commits the child marriage shall be liable to a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years and a fine not exceeding thirty thousand rupees.

CEFM is widely recognized within international agreements as a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls, preventing them from living their lives free from all forms of violence. It threatens the lives and futures of girls and women around the world, robbing them of their agency to make decisions about their lives, disrupting their education, making them more vulnerable to violence, discrimination and abuse, and preventing their full participation in economic, political and social spheres.

The impact of child, early and forced marriage on the realization and enjoyment of girls' and women's rights can be wide ranging. It can imply significant age and

power differentials between a bride and her spouse, which undermine the agency and autonomy of girls and young women. In this context, girls and young women often face physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence, and restrictions on their movement.

Child, early and forced marriage is associated with a range of poor health and social outcomes and other negative consequences. Specifically, early and frequent pregnancies and forced continuation of pregnancy are all common in child marriages. They are closely linked to high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates and can have an adverse effect on girls' sexual and reproductive health (OHCHR, Practices in adopting a human rights-based approach to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and human rights (A/HRC/18/27 and Corr.1 and 2), para. 11.)

Child marriage and early childbearing are also recognized as significant obstacles to ensuring educational, employment and other economic opportunities for girls and young women. Often, girls are discouraged from attending school when they get married or may be expelled from school when they become pregnant and are treated as adult women regardless of their age.

Since child marriage is the global problem, it has attracted the serious attention of political, bureaucratic and developmental bodies globally. A number of human rights instruments lay down norms to be applied to marriage, covering issues of age, consent, equality within marriage, and the personal and property rights of women.

The Constitution of Nepal has banned child marriage. Nepal has adopted legal, policy and programmatic measures to end child marriage. It has committed to end early and child marriage by 2030 as stated in SDGs by adopting National Strategy to End Child Marriage. Robust programs are in implementation. It has focused on the concerted collaboration and coordination among development partners, INGOs, CSOs, private sectors and media to end early and child marriage. By which, it is realized progressive results in the domain of child marriage reflected through lowering down the percentage of woman aged 15-19 years who are married or in union to 19.3 at 2019 from 24.5 at 2014.(NMICS 2019) and contributing for voiding the child marriage. However, it is still to know what are the impacts of void marriage upon young couples especially on girls. In this context, NCRC has conducted a national study on the status of child marriage and impact of void marriage upon the girls.

1.2 International Human Rights Instruments on CEFM

Number of human rights instruments has considered CEFM as a prohibitory practice. Most of these instruments have emphasized that marriage to be solemnized with consent of intending spouse. It has stressed on ensuring equality of rights and duties of spouses as to marriage and specifying minimum age for marriage. All of these instruments have focused that forced marriage amounts to slavery and marriage of the girls under puberty to be eliminated and to set minimum age for marriage at 18 years. Some of the key human rights instruments mentioning issues of CEFM are presented in the below table:

Table No. 1: Key Human Rights Instruments

S No.	Name of the Instrument	Article	The Provision
1.	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	16(1)	Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
2.	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	23(2),(3)	(2)The right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to found a family shall be recognized. (3) No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouse.
3.	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	10(1) Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouse.
4.	CEDAW Convention, 1979	16(1)	State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (a) The same right to enter into marriage; (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent; The same right and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

S No.	Name of the Instrument	Article	The Provision
		16(2)	The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.
5.	The Convention on the Rights of Child, 1989	34	State parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. For this purpose, the state parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices
			Article 19(1): States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. Article 19(2): Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described here to fore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.
6.	Convention on the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage, 1964	1(1)	No marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties, such consent to be expressed by them in person after due publicity and in the presence of the authority competent to solemnize the marriage and of witnesses, as prescribed by law.

S No.	Name of the Instrument	Article	The Provision
7.	The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices, 1956	2, the States Parties undertake to prescribe, where appropriate, suitable minimum ages of marriage, to encourage the use of facilities whereby the consent of both parties to a marriage may be freely expressed in the presence of a competent civil or religious authority, and to encourage the registration of marriages.
8.	Joint general recommendation/ general comment No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices	31	The CRC obliges States parties to “take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children” (art. 24(3)). In addition, the CRC provides for the right of the child to be protected from all forms of violence, including physical, sexual or psychological violence (art. 19) and requires States parties to ensure that no child be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37 (a)). The CRC applies the four general principles of the Convention to the issue of harmful practices, namely protection from discrimination (art. 2), ensuring the best interests of the child (art. 3(1)), upholding the right to life, survival and development (art. 6) and the right of the child to be heard (art. 12).

All of the instruments are stressing on child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be eighteen years. Nepal has received a number of recommendations to eliminate child marriage and other harmful practices through appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

1.3 National Legal and Policy Framework on CEFM

Identifying child marriage as one of the barriers for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, its eradication has been listed as a priority in the work plan of the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030). By co-organizing the UN Human Rights Council's resolution on child, early and forced marriage in 2013, Nepal had shown its firm commitment against child marriage. In the high level Girl Summit on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Early, Forced and Child Marriage in the UK held on 22 July 2014, Nepal committed to ending child marriage by 2030.

Nepal is committed to protect, promote and fulfill the rights of the child by adopting constitutional, legal, policy, institutional and programmatic measures. The Constitution of Nepal has ensured the rights of the child as fundamental rights. It has adopted best interest of child as state policy. It has ensured the rights of every child to survive, protection, development, participation and child friendly justice. It explicitly prohibits child marriage as a punishable offense and establishes victims' right to compensation for violations from perpetrators. The Constitution guarantees right to identity and birth registration; right to education and health care; right to protection from hazardous work; and protection from neglect, immoral use, or any form of physical, mental, or sexual abuse or exploitation in the name of religious or cultural practices. The Constitution provides judicial and non-judicial remedies through prerogative writs and public interest litigation to obtain redress for violations of these fundamental rights.

For the effective implementation of fundamental rights, Nepal has enacted the Act Relating to Child, 2018. It has ensured thirteen different rights of the child. It establishes child marriage as offensive work. Section 66 Sub Section 2 (o) of this Act mentions that any act to fix child marriage, or marry, or cause to marry with children under the age of 18 is regarded as offensive work and Section 72 Sub 3(b) penalizes the a fine of up to seventy-five thousand rupees and imprisonment for up to three years. Section 68 mentions that ff the father, mother, guardian, one who directly provides services to the child such the caregiver, teacher, health-worker or any other person comes to know that any person has committed or is committing or going to commit act of violence (including fixing his or her marriage, or marry, or cause to marry him or her) or child sexual abuse against the child he or she shall give information thereof to the nearby police office immediately. The police office will refer the information and seek support from concern child welfare officer. The identity of the informant will be kept confidential.

The National Civil (Code) Act, 2017 defines marriage is legally defined as a permanent, inviolable and holy social and legal bond, which is based on free consent of the persons getting married and established to start conjugal and family life between a man and a woman. It guarantees the people's freedom to conclude a marriage, establish a family and spend a conjugal life. The section 70 sub-section (1d) states the legal age of marriage at 20 for both spouses. The section 173 of The Penal Code 2017 prohibits of

concluding child marriage unless parties to the marriage have attained twenty years of age. Such type of marriage shall, ipso facto, be void. If a person who commits the child marriage shall be liable to a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years and a fine not exceeding thirty thousand rupees.

National Policy on Children 2069 (2012 AD) has identified child marriage as a barrier for the practical realization of children's rights. It has provided for, in collaboration with government and development partners, the mobilization of organizations at the community level, proactive complaints registration and conducting of various awareness-raising programmes.

The National Strategy for Ending Child Marriage, 2072 (2015 AD) has aimed to end child marriage in Nepal by 2030. Following objective have been set in order to achieve this aim:

- Effective implementation, amendment and reform of existing laws in order to end child marriage in Nepal.
- Incorporating and implementing within the government programmes and action-plans with priority programmes targeted towards ending child marriage.
- Ensuring compulsorily the participation of children, adolescents and males in such programmes.
- Enhancing the capacity of children, adolescents, guardians, teachers, political and social pioneers, organizations etc. and mobilizing them to bring about changes in the mindset and practices that promote child marriage.
- Monitoring and evaluating such programmes.
- In collaboration with government and development partners, identifying and allocating sources, enhancing institutional capacity to help girl children access services and to address problems as well as for effective mobilization.

It has adopted the following strategic directions to end child marriage:

- Empowerment of girls and adolescents,
- Ensuring quality education for girls and adolescents,
- Engaging boy, adolescents and male,
- Mobilization of family and community,
- Quality service delivery
- Strengthening policy measures and its implementation

Sub-heading 7 of section 7 of the 15th periodic plan includes the part for children and adolescents. It envisions a child-friendly society that ensures the rights of children and

aims to develop children and adolescents as qualified and capable citizens who can build a nation by protecting and promoting their rights by freeing them from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. It has adopted working policies to incorporate the issues of child marriage in school curriculum.

The objectives of this plan are as follows.

- To protect and promote the rights of children and adolescents.
- Creating a child and adolescent friendly environment.
- To end all forms of violence, discrimination, abuse, exploitation and neglect against children and adolescents, including physical and mental.

Nepal is a member of governing body of SAARC-affiliated "South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children"- SAIEVAC. One of the strategic areas of the SAIEVAC is to fight against child marriage. It has focused its efforts against child marriage in SAARC countries by preparing a "Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage" (2015-2018) through a national mechanism. In line with this strategy, the Government of Nepal organized a SAARC-level "Regional Convening on Using Law to Promote Accountability to End Child Marriage" in November 2014 and adopted the "Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage from South Asia". The key actions of the convening is presented below:

1. Formally recognize and denounce child marriage as a human rights violation that governments in the region are obligated to monitor, prevent, punish, and address through legal remedies and administrative measures.
2. Review and harmonize national laws and policies relating to child marriage in line with constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights, commitments made in SAARC instruments, and state obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights under international law and to comply with reporting requirements and implement recommendations.
3. Eliminate discriminatory provisions concerning marriage in all laws, including personal laws, by establishing a uniform minimum legal age of marriage of 18, clarifying the legal status of child marriages, creating safeguards to ensure the full and informed consent of parties to a marriage, removing burdensome requirements for ending a child marriage, and amending specific provisions to ensure equal rights within marriage regardless of religious background.
4. 4 Ensure access to legal remedies for girls whose rights are violated as a result of child marriage by introducing appropriate laws, raising legal awareness, providing legal counselling and legal aid, and enforcing penalties for violations of the law.

5. Harmonize child marriage prevention and prohibition laws with laws that protect against all forms of violence, including sexual violence, require birth and marriage registration, determine property rights, and ensure equal citizenship rights and other relevant laws.
6. Introduce legal reform recognizing marital rape as a punishable offence without establishing an age limit for its recognition as a crime and without prescribing a lesser punishment for marital rape.
7. Strengthen the enforcement of national laws prohibiting child marriage, specifically by ensuring that girls at risk are aware of legal protections against child marriage and that local government officials have the authority and capacity to execute their responsibilities to prevent child marriages in local communities.
8. Ensure that girls who are married under 18 years, or who have left a child marriage, have access to various forms of institutional support, including psycho-social counselling, protection mechanisms (including toll-free help lines), and opportunities for economic empowerment.
9. Ensure access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health information and services for girls and boys to inform them about the risks of early marriage, and ensure that married girls have immediate access to such information and services as a means to protect them against the risks and consequences of early pregnancy.
10. Support efforts by national human rights institutions to promote accountability for violations resulting from child marriage and ensure compliance with international norms and concluding observations issued by United Nations treaty monitoring bodies.
11. Support the inclusion of a specific target to eliminate child marriage under the goal on gender equality in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.
12. Ensure the effective implementation of the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia by allocating adequate resources for its successful implementation in 2015-2018.

The Regional Action Plan is a commitment by governments in South Asia to end child marriage. It is important because it officially recognises child marriage as a human rights violation and acknowledges that it is a common concern for governments in the region. It takes a holistic approach to ending child marriage, with seven main areas of focus:

- Effectively enacting, enforcing and using national legal and policy instruments

- to increase the minimum age of marriage to 18 for both boys and girls;
- Ensuring access to quality education, especially secondary;
- Increasing the mobilisation of girls, boys, parents, and religious leaders, to change discriminatory gender norms;
- Increasing child marriage prevention by addressing its root causes and creating alternative social, economic and civic opportunities for girls;
- Collective evidence on the status of married girls and good programmes to address their needs;
- Enhancing advocacy to mobilise action and support for girls who are already married, providing options for sexual and reproductive health information and services and recourse from violence in the home, including annulling marriages; and
- Better monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of programmes to end child marriage in South Asia.

Identifying child marriage as one of the barriers for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, its eradication has been listed as a priority in the workplan of the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030) and an extended set of development goals included a specific target to end child, early and forced marriage. Target 5.3 aims to “eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage”. This is an important tool to drive action, hold governments to account for their commitments to girls, and track progress on ending child marriage globally. SDGs and child marriage are closely linked.

Table No. 2: Goal of SDGs Linked to CEFM¹

SN	SDG	Linkage to CEFM
1	Goal 1 – No poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child brides are more likely to be from deprived background and then get locked into a cycle poverty. • Girls from socioeconomically disadvantaged families are more likely to marry before 18 than girls from wealthier families. • Child marriage depriving them of opportunities, education and access to paid employment. • When girls have access to economic opportunities, they can plan a more prosperous future for themselves, their families and their communities.

1 Girls not brides (2020). SDG and Child marriage

SN	SDG	Linkage to CEFM
2	Goal 2 – Zero hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child brides and their children are more likely to be malnourished • Families with little food may marry their daughters in order to have one mouth less to feed. • Child brides usually suffer higher rates of malnutrition, due to early and frequent pregnancies. • Babies born to girls younger than 15 are more likely to die before their 5th birthday, suffer from malnutrition and experience stunting.
3	Goal 3 – Good health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage threatens girls’ health and that of their children • Child brides are under a lot of pressure to have children. Early pregnancy puts their health at risk: every year, 70,000 adolescent girls in developing countries die of causes related to pregnancy and child birth. • Child marriage can lead to poor mental health, including feelings of isolation, depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviours. • Ending child marriage will improve girls’ health and wellbeing throughout their lives. More about child marriage and health.
4	Goal 4 – Inclusive and quality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage usually marks the end of a girl’s education • Marriage limits a girl’s ability to go to school, learn new skills and put the ones she has to use. • Being out of school puts girls at risk. Girls with no education are three times more likely to marry before 18 compared to girls with a secondary or higher education. • Education is one of the most powerful tools to end child marriage and help girls succeed in life.
5	Goal 5 – Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage keeps us from achieving gender equality • Child marriage is rooted in inequality between men and women and discriminatory views towards a girl’s value, sexuality and role in society. • Ending child marriage is a strategic way of tackling gender inequality and shifting the discriminatory norms that perpetuate child marriage. • We need to empower girls so they can choose if, when and whom they marry.

SN	SDG	Linkage to CEFM
6	Goal 8 – Economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child brides are less likely to lead prosperous lives • Child brides are less likely to participate in the workforce once they become adults. When they do, it's usually in lower skilled and lower paid jobs. • When girls have the skills and opportunities to secure a job, they can support themselves and their families and break the cycle of poverty. • Child marriage is costing countries trillions of dollars through its impact on fertility, population growth, earnings and child health, according to the World Bank and ICRW.
7	Goal 10 – Reduce inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage affects the most vulnerable populations • Child marriage disproportionately affects deprived, rural and disadvantaged girls, creating cycles of poverty that reinforce inequalities. • Child brides have little decision-making power in their homes or communities and are less likely to participate fully in society. They are often marginalised and hard to reach. • Leaving no one behind means targeting married girls and girls at risk of child marriage.
8	Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will not end violence against children without ending child marriage. • Child marriage is a form of violence against girls and a violation of their most fundamental human rights. • Child brides often face violence at the hands of their partners or their in-laws, especially if there is a large age difference. • The violence of forced sexual initiation and early pregnancy have a lasting impact on married girls' physical and mental health throughout their life. • Ending violence against children needs to go hand in hand with ending child marriage.
9	Goal 17 – Partners for the goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SDGs champion the power of partnership. They highlight the importance of bringing together multiple stakeholders to make progress on sustainable development.

By Constitution, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has three main levels of state structure-federal, province and local level. The state power of Nepal is used by the federal, province and local level in accordance with the constitution. Three tiers of government are sensitive to end child marriage. They are committed by adopting policy and program measures. Province No.1 committed to declare child marriage free

province by 2025. Bagmati Province is committed to make child marriage free by 2021. Province no. 2 is committed to reduce child marriage through "Save the Girl: Educate the Girl" campaign.

Lumbini province has endorsed 10 year strategy to end child marriage. The strategy aims at working with local governments and partners in Lumbini to educate, aware and empower children and their parents on the importance of ending child marriage through imparting skill-based training and conducting community-level awareness campaigns. It also aims at generating research and analysis to identify the existing problems in order to enable the concerned authorities and agencies to chart out an action plan against child marriage. Similarly, Sudurpaschim Province is implementing *Sanai Chhu, BadnaDeu: Bal BibahaHaina, PadnaDeu* (I am younger, Let me grow: No marriage, Let me learn/ study) campaign to reduce child marriage. Few local levels have adopted insurance policy to reduce child marriage. Initiatives being carried out by non-governmental organizations and child clubs, including raising public awareness against child marriage and controlling child marriage, are coming to attention.

While numerous legal measures are in place, challenges persist. Marriage laws are not appropriately enforced which is likely due to the overarching belief that marriage is viewed as a family matter, rather than a matter of the State.² There is also a lack of consistent registration of marriages which makes the issue harder to tackle.³ Finally, the widespread lack of birth registration makes age verification impossible. This issue underscores the importance of developing the capacity of local, provincial and national governments to collect and store vital statistics records for births and marriages.

1.4 Prevalence of CEFM in Nepal

CEFM is still significantly prevailing in Nepal; however it is in declining trend. As per the Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2019) 5.2 percent of married people of the age group 20 to 24 years are married under 15 years (1.5% males and 7.9% females) and 22.7 percent are married under 18 years of age (9% males and 32.8% females). Similarly, 12.8 percent (males 5.3% and females 19.3%) of the 15 to 19-year-olds are found to be married. According to the Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS 2016), among women

2 K. Sekine and M. E. Hodgkin, "Effect of child marriage on girls' school dropout in Nepal: Analysis of data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014," pp. 1–13, 2017.

3 A. Bajracharya and S. Amin, "Poverty, Marriage Timing, and Transitions to Adulthood in Nepal," *Stud. Fam. Plann.*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 79–92, 2012.

age 25-49, 13% were married by age 15, while only 3% of men married that young. Fifty-two percent of women were married by age 18, as compared with 19% of men. Seventy-one percent of women age 25-49 were married by age 20, far higher than the 38% of men who were married by that age.

NMICS (2014) showed that percentage of women aged 20–24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 was 10 and before age 18 was 37 in 2014. Percentage of women aged 15–19 years who were married or in union was 24.5. According to the Population Monograph, 2014, Part 2 (Social Demographics) of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 26.3 percent of children in the age group of 10 to 18 years were married. It signifies that the trend of marrying off in young age is in decreasing trend. However, Nepal has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Asia – for both girls and boys.

Child marriage is a human rights violation, restricting children’s choices, changing their course in life, and putting them at significant risk of abuse and violence. The reasons behind child marriage in Nepal are complex. Poverty, the low value attached to daughters, and lack of access to education are contributory factors, while the caste system and patriarchal culture similarly play a role. It increasingly appears that teenagers are choosing their own partners and may even elope. In some cases, parents encourage adolescents to initiate their own marriage to avoid the high costs associated with dowry or wedding. Adolescents may also choose to elope as sexual expression outside of marriage is not acceptable, to avoid forced or arranged marriage or to escape from difficulties at home. Peer group effects and social medias are also causing early and child marriage in Nepal.

Closely related to the issue of child marriage is the age at which sexual activity – and for females, childbearing – may begin. NDHS (2016) reveals that eleven percent of women age 25-49 had initiated sexual intercourse by age 15, while more than half (51%) had their first sexual intercourse by age 18 and 71% by age 20. These large proportions indicate a high chance of early pregnancy.⁴ In addition, pregnancy related deaths are known to be a leading cause of mortality for both married and unmarried girls between the ages of 15 and 19.⁵

4 Ministry of Health and Population. (2016). Nepal demographic and health survey. Kathmandu: Author

5 National Planning Commission. (2020). Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Finding Report. Kathmandu: Author.

NMICS (2019) shows that percentage of women age 20-24 years who have had a live birth before age 15 and 18 is 1.9 and 16.9 respectively. Percentage of married women age 15-19 years who have had a live birth is 8.8 (2.6 for men) and the percentage of married women age 15-19 who had a live birth before the age 15 is 0.4 (0.3 for men). The rate is varied as per the education and wealth level. Higher the education and wealth level lower the birth rate is observed (Percentage of married women age 15-19 years who have had a live birth is 25.2 for none educated and 2.2 for higher educated, 11.3 for poorest and 3.3 at richest). This shows that the risk of early pregnancy and pregnancy related death are still prevail in Nepal. This risk is more significant in uneducated and poorest community.

Weight at birth is a good indicator not only of a mother's health and nutritional status but also the newborn's chances for survival, growth, long-term health and psychosocial development. Early and child marriage causes low weight at birth.

NMICS (2019) shows that early and child marriage causes polygynous marriage. It shows that polygynous union is higher in men than to women and spousal age difference is significant. Percentage in polygynous marriage/union of married women between 15-49 is 2.8 and between the age of 15-19 is 1.3. In the case of married men, it is 2.0 percentages for the age of 15-49 and for the age of 15-19 is 3.5 percentage respectively. Percentage of currently married women age 15-19 years whose husband or partner is more than 10 years older is 9.6. Early and child marriage are also linked to domestic violence. NMICS (2019) mentions that 21.9 percentages of married women age 15-19 believe a husband is justified in beating his wife in various circumstances and 24.9 percentages of married men age 15-19 believe a husband is justified in beating his wife in any circumstances.

Another issue related to child marriage is its reporting as per the legal provision. According to the Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Directorate under the Police Headquarters, 48 cases of child marriage has been reported (41 in previous FY) in FY 2020/21, out of them, 28 are in the age group of 11-16 years and 20 are in the age group of 17-18 years. Despite the reported cases is low, it signifies that the reporting of child marriage cases is slightly increasing. This fact is justified by the number of cases managed by Child Helpline, 1098 operated in 18 stations. Child Helpline managed a total of 316 cases of child marriage (96 girl and 13 boys are rescued from

being married and 207 cases of child marriage are stopped) in FY 2020/21. The cases of child marriage managed by Child Helpline in 2018/19 was 209 (52 boys and 157 girls) and 252 (boys 59 and girls 193) in FY 2019/20 respectively.

As per various media monitoring through NCRC for FY 2019/2020, a total of 208 children (68 boys and 140 girls) have been affected in 140 cases of child marriage in 29 districts. Of these, 68 marriages were under aged, 4 marriages were unmatched and 68 marriages were between a female child and adult male. Incidents of child marriage are reported to be more prevalent among children themselves than through parents. For the period, a total of 32 child marriages have been cancelled, 22 cases by Nepal Police and 10 by child clubs.⁶ The statistics shows that reporting of child marriage in concern police station is in growing trend and mass is more aware about the legal provision about child marriage. However, the situation girls whose marriages are void are still unstudied.

1.5 Rational of the Study

National Child Rights Council (NCRC) is the apex body of the Government of Nepal for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child. It is mandated for policy advisory, policy defense, capacity enhancement and national child rights and child protection system strengthening. It is conducting specific national campaigns for protecting and promoting the rights of children by prioritizing the plan, annual policy and program approved by the Government of Nepal. NCRC is working for establishing it as a child rights resource center through knowledge generation, knowledge management and knowledge transfer. In this connection, the current study, commissioned by NCRC, on the status of child marriage and impact of void marriage upon the girls is connected to knowledge generation and justified for addressing the issues significantly incorporated in the constitution, laws, policy and program measures. Since Nepal is committed to end the CEFM by 2030, the current study is aiming to contribute for these ends to adopt appropriate measures. This study explores the prevalence of CEFM in Nepal in terms of incidence and its reporting, triggering factors, pregnancy and safe delivery and outcomes which is essential to design evidence-based effective and efficient program in all level of governance.

⁶ National Child Rights Council. (2020), State of Children in Nepal. Lalitpur: Author

There is extensive literature available on child marriage – from the harmful health effects associated with child marriage, to education and its links. There have been large studies conducted across multiple countries, and qualitative studies that provide nuanced contextual information. There is a large library of global evidence, as well as a handful of rigorously conducted studies from the context of Nepal, which is encouraging. What is missing from the literature is evidence on the impacts of existing policies that reduce child marriage. One of the unstudied areas of CEFM is that how void marriage impacted upon the young couples especially girls. Elopements, or self-initiated marriages, are emerging in the child marriage literature in Nepal. More concrete evidence regarding the practice is needed in terms of prevalence, the mechanisms in which it is occurring, a better understanding of why it is occurring from girls’ perspectives and appropriate interventions to address the practice. The current study is relevant to explore the impact of void marriage upon girls and a possible way to mitigate it.



CHAPTER-2

Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Overarching Goal of the Study:

The overarching goal of the study is to design effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM and impact of void marriage upon the young couples especially on girls.

2.2 Research Objectives:

The objectives of this research are:

- To find out the prevalence and triggering factors of CEFM in Nepal.
- To know the impact of void marriage upon the girls.
- To identify the effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM in Nepal.

2.3 Research Questions:

The research is intended to get answers to the following research questions:

- What are the contributing factors for CEFM?
- How the incidence of CEFM can be reduced?
- How the adverse effect of void marriage upon girls can be reduced?
- What are effective and efficient programs to reduce CEFM?

2.4 Research Design

As this study is intended to find the prevalence, contributing factors of CEFM and impact of void marriage upon the girls, both analytical as well as descriptive research designs were used. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used. Primary data for this study was collected through Survey, Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant Interview, In-depth Interview and case analysis to meet the stated objectives.

2.5 Sampling Design

As this study is intended to collect information from targeted respondents comprising of locally elected representatives, law enforcement agencies and NGO practitioners,

the study adopted purposive sampling for analyzing the triggering factors of CEFM and its impact. The cases of void marriage were collected from concern police office and child helpline 1098. FGDs and KIIs were carried out in all seven provinces. In each province FGDs with small groups comprising provincial and local government leaders and government key stakeholders, NGO practitioners, activists and child club graduates and child club members was carried out. Similarly, the cases of void marriage were analyzed from Province 1, Bagmati and Sudurpaschim Provinces. Federal-level consultation with key governmental stakeholders, representatives of civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders were conducted on the draft report and the report was finalized incorporating the feedback from these consultations.

2.6. Methods of Data Collection

Following methods were used to collect the data from both primary and secondary sources.

i) *Focused Group Discussion (FGD)*

A total of 18 FGDs with provincial and local government leaders and key stakeholders of government, NGO practitioners, activists and child club graduates and child club members were conducted to obtain qualitative data on the topic. Among them 8 FGDs were conducted in person in Province 1 and Bagmati Province and 10 FGDs (5 with children and 5 with adults) were conducted virtually in the rest of 5 provinces. One FGD was concluded 6 to 12 respondents and the discussion was carried for around one and half hour.

Table No. 3: Details of participants in FGD

SN	Male	Female	Boys	Girls	Total
Number	44	30	21	40	135
Percentage	33	22	15	30	100

ii) *Key Informant Interview (KII)*

A total of 38 KIIs were conducted with province and local level authorities-official of Provincial Social Development Ministry/Social Development Division, Deputy Mayor/Chair of local level, Legal officer of the Municipalities of host provinces, police officer, government attorneys, representative of civil society organization and NHRC as well. Out of 38 KIIs,11 were conducted in person in Province 1 and

Bagmati Province and 27 KIIs were conducted virtually in the rest of 5 provinces. Each interview was last for one hour to one and half hour depending on experience and knowledge of respondents on the issue.

Table No. 4: Details of participants in KII

SN	Male	Female	Boys	Girls	Total
Number	21	17	0	0	38
Percentage	55	45	0	0	100

iii) *Case Study/Analysis*

In-depth descriptive information about the 12 cases of void marriage registered in police office of Province 1, Bagmati and Sudurpaschimprovince were collected, organized, interpreted, and presented in a narrative format. Out of 12 cases, majority (50%) were married at the age of 15 followed by 42% at 16 and 8% at 17 and all of them were self-initiated and love marriage. Out of 12, majority (58%) were completed secondary education followed by 25% who were completed primary education and 17% were illiterate. As the religion regards, majority of them (42%) were Buddhist, followed by Hindu (33%), Muslim (16%) and Christian (9%). Out of 12, majority (50%) of them were Tamang followed by Chhetri and Urau (16%) and Magar and Sherpa (9%).

iv) *Survey with Local Levels*

A total of 604 officials from 604 local levels were surveyed to identify the prevalence, triggering factors, consequences of child marriage upon the young couples.

Table No. 5 : Details of Surveyed Local Levels

SN	Province	LLs	Surveyed LLs	Percentage
1	1	137	137	100
2	2	136	19	13.97
3	Bagmati	119	117	98.32
4	Gandaki	85	76	89.41
5	Lumbini	109	88	80.73
6	Karnali	79	79	100
7	Sudoorpaschim	88	88	100
	Total	753	604	80.21

v) *Documentation of Existing International and National Policy Guides*

Constitutional provisions and relevant laws concerning child marriage were documented as primary authority.

2.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

All the data collected through stated methods are analyzed using matrix tabulation. All the qualitative information and data are coded, clustered and thematically analyzed. Quantitative data was presented through graphs and tables as necessary. Content analysis was conducted for qualitative data by presenting them in the forms of code and statement in order to explain and/or substantiate the quantitative findings.

2.8 Scope and limitation of the study

The study is intended to explore the prevalence, triggering factors and impact of CEFM in Nepal. The findings from the study are expected to contribute in designing effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM in all level of governance of Nepal. However, the findings from the study cannot be generalized in all circumstances due to methodological limitation. The study is limited to analyze the 12 cases of void marriage so it might not be covered all the dimensions of impact upon the girls.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, following ethics were highly considered:

- All possible means were used to inform the participants about the objectives of the research, the advantages from it, and any other inconveniences.
- Verbal consent was taken before the administration of any tool.
- In interviews and case analysis, the respondent's anonymity was preserved and they were assured of the confidentiality of the data.
- The study team made sure that there was no re – traumatizing of respondents by the use of language and behavior of researchers /data enumerators.
- All participants were informed about their withdrawal in participation in interview and discussion at any point of time when they like to stop.



CHAPTER-3

Findings

3.1 Status of CEFM Incidence

The status of CEFM incidence is explained in terms of the cases of CEFM observed, trend of prevalence and its reporting to concern agencies. The incidence of CEFM is still significantly prevails in Nepal but in decreasing, under reported and diversified form. It is supported by the findings from survey with 604 local levels, 18 FGDs and 38 KIIs. The survey with 604 local levels reveals that a total of 4656 incidence of CEFM was observed in 268 local levels till April 2021. The majority of the respondents of FGDs and KIIs (89%) reported that the incidence of CEFM is still significant in Nepal. The number of incidences observed 268 local levels in FY 2020/21 is lesser by 1486 than of FY 2019/20 that is 6142. It signifies that the trend of CEFM is in decreasing. It supports the findings of NMICS (2019) which shows that the percent of married people of the age group 20 to 24 years are married under 15 and 18 years are decreased from 24.5 at 2014 to 12.8 at 2019 and from 37 at 2014 to 22.4 at 2019 respectively. Another aspect of CEFM status is its reporting to concern agencies. Survey with local levels shows that out of 4656 cases of CEFM incidence observed in FY 2020/21, only 382 cases are reported to concern agencies-police, local judicial committee, child rights committee and Child Helpline 1098. The details of status of CEFM incidence are explained in the following sub headings:

3.1.1 Cases of CEFM

Out of 604 local levels surveyed, 268 local levels reported that they have observed the incidence of CEFM in their local levels. A total of 4656 incidence of CEFM are observed till the April 2021. The details of province wise cases of CEFM observed are explained in table no.6.

Table No. 6: Province wise cases of CEFM, 2021

SN	Province	Number of Ls	Interviewed Ls	CEFM Reported Ls	Cases of CEFM
1	1	137	137	23	78
2	2	136	19	19	359
3	Bagmati	119	117	60	761
4	Gandaki	85	76	23	321
5	Lumbini	109	88	35	738
6	Karnali	79	79	70	1772
7	Sudurpaschim	88	88	38	627
	Total	753	604	268	4656

Source: Survey, 2021

The table no. 6 shows the cases of CEFM in local level reported by respondents in survey. Out of 604 surveyed local levels, 268 (44.3%) local levels reported that they have observed the incidence of CEFM in their local levels. It is found that Karnali province is marked with highest number of CEFM incidence (1772) and number of local levels observed CEFM incidence (70/79) followed by Bagmati Province (761), Lumbini (738) Province and Sudurpaschim (627) Province respectively. Province 1 is marked with lowest number of CEFM incidence (78) and number of local levels (23/137) observed CEFM incidence. Province no 2 is marked with all the local levels surveyed are observed the CEFM incidence. This is supported by the FGD and KIIs conducted in Karnali Province and Province no 2. Survey reveals that Aamchowk RM (13/78) of Bhojpur district, Baragadhi RM (300/359) of Bara district, Kailash RM (100/761) of Makwanpur district, Hupsekot RM (90/321) of Nawalpur district, Naubahini RM (160/738) of Pyuthan district, BangadKupinde RM (98/1772) of Salyan district and Surna RM (95/627) of Bajhang district are marked with highest number of CEFM incidence in FY 2020/21. The table suggests that Karnali Province and Province no. 2 followed by Bagmati, Sudurpaschim and Lumbini requires robust anti CEFM campaign and concerted interventions.

3.1.2 Current Trend of CEFM

There is debate whether the incidence of CEFM is in increasing or decreasing trend. Due to high and massive discourse on CEFM, the general perception is that it is increasing trend. It is even supported by the FGDs and KIIs. Majority of the respondent

(62%) of FGD and KII reported that CEFM is in increasing trend. Almost 90% of the respondent believed that self-initiated marriages are increased in comparison to previous years in their community. Respondents of FGD and KIIs in Province 1 and Sudurpaschim reported that COVID significantly caused to increase the cases of CEFM since schools and colleges were closed and they had nothing to engage on which increased access on internet and social media for a longer period of time.

The findings of survey with 604 local levels challenged the general perception that CEFM is in increasing trend. More than one third of the respondent of FGDs and KIIs also believed that CEFM is in decreasing trend. The survey reveals that the total number of CEFM incidence observed in 310 local levels was 6142 in FY 2019/2020 but the incidence is limited to 4656 in FY 2020/21. Even the incidence observed local levels are also decreased to 268 in FY 2020/21. This supports the finding of NMICS (2019) which shows that percentage of marrying off before the age of 18 and 15 are in decreasing trend. The details of province wise CEFM incidence in two years are explained in the table..

Table No. 7: Province wise cases of CEFM in 2019/20 & 2020/21

SN	Province	Number of LLs	Surveyed LLs	CEFM Reported LLs	Cases of CEFM 2020/21	Cases of CEFM 2019/20	Difference in number	%
1	1	137	137	23	78	108	30	28
2	2	136	19	19	359	393	34	9
3	Bagmati	119	117	60	761	1032	271	26
4	Gandaki	85	76	23	321	299	22	-7
5	Lumbini	109	88	35	738	885	147	17
6	Karnali	79	79	70	1772	2573	801	31
7	Sudurpaschim	88	88	38	627	852	225	26
	Total	753	604	268	4656	6142	1486	24

Source: Survey, 2021

The table no.7 shows the number of CEFM cases observed in two FYs reported by the respondent of survey with local levels. The FY 2020/21 is marked with the decreasing of 24% cases of CEFM in comparison to FY 2019/20. It is found that all the provinces are marked with decreasing trend except Gandaki province. Karnali province has significant difference in the number of incidence (31%) followed by Province 1 (28%), Bagmati and Sudurpaschim Province (26%), Lumbini Province (17%) and Province 1 (9%) respectively. However, Gandaki province is negatively marked with increasing

trend (7%). Despite the incidence of CEFM is in decreasing trend, the number of incidences observed in FY 2020/21 is significant. So, concerted interventions from all level of governance are essential.

3.1.3 Reporting of Incidence of CEFM

One of the major issues of CEFM is it's reporting to concern agencies for legal actions. Section 68 of the Act Relating to Children, 2018 mentions that if the father, mother, guardian, one who directly provides services to the child such the caregiver, teacher, health-worker or any other person comes to know that any person has committed or is committing or going to commit act of violence (including fixing his or her marriage, or marry, or cause to marry him or her) or child sexual abuse against the child he or she shall give information thereof to the nearby police office immediately. The police office will refer the information and seek support from concern child welfare officer. There is slightly increasing trend in reporting of CEFM however, the incidences of CEFM are under reported. This is supported by the findings of survey with 604 local levels and perception of respondents from FGD and KIIs. Out of total observed number of CEFM incidences (4656), only 382 (8%) incidences are reported in FY 2020/21. The details of incidence reporting is presented in table 8.

Table No.8 : Number of CEFM incidence and its Reporting

SN	Province	Number of CM	Reported Case	Percentage	Stopped Cases
1	1	78	59	76	45
2	2	359	18	5	35
3	Bagmati	761	44	6	325
4	Gandaki	321	22	7	41
5	Lumbini	738	72	10	149
6	Karnali	1772	132	7	311
7	Sudoorpaschim	627	35	6	50
Total		4656	382	8	956

Source: Survey, 2021

The table shows the number of CEFM cases observed and reported for FY 2020/21 in all provinces. Karnali province is marked with highest cases observed and Province 1 with highest percentage of case reporting. Rest of provinces despite Province 1 are significantly noticed for under reporting of CEFM cases. Majority of the respondents

of FGD and KIIs believed that the incidences of CEFM are under reported. One of the respondents of KII stated following in this regard:

The situation of child marriage is on the rise. There were 27 written and oral complaints in 077/078 BS. In an average of 20 cases of child marriage, there are hardly 2-3 complaints, then estimate for yourself how many child marriages have taken place. (District Police Office, Dhanusha)

One of the respondents of FGD stated that:

There are many child marriages prevalent in the society but no one dares to complain. If 100 marriages take place in a month, 3-4 complaints are lodged. Among those 3-4 complaints, only 1-2 are annulled. (NGOs Practitioner, Province 2)

Another encouraging aspect of CEFM incidence is that reporting to concern agencies and managing the incidences are slightly increasing. It is supported by the findings from survey with local levels, number of incidences reporting to police and the number of incidences managed by Child Helpline, 1098. Survey with 604 local levels reveals that out of 4656 incidences of CEFM, a total of 956 (20%) incidences are stopped in FY 2020/21 (Table 8). In the previous FY, a total of 1177 (19%) incidence were stopped among 6142 cases of CEFM. According to the Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Directorate under the Police Headquarters, 48 cases of child marriage has been reported (41 in previous FY) in FY 2020/21, out of them, 28 are in the age group of 11-16 years and 20 are in the age group of 17-18 years. Child Helpline 1098, a child protection mechanism operated in 18 stations managed a total of 316 cases of child marriage (96 girl and 13 boys are rescued from being married and 207 cases of child marriage are stopped) in FY 2020/21. The cases of child marriage managed by Child Helpline in 2018/19 was 209 (52 boys and 157 girls) and 252 (boys 59 and girls 193) in FY 2019/20 respectively. It signifies that Child Helpline 1098 are operationalized as a best child protection mechanism to annul the incidence of CEFM. It is required to strengthen 1098 services further to deal the incidence of CEFM.

3.1.4 Wider Prevalence of CEFM Incidence

There is diversity in CEFM incidence in terms of ecological region, caste, economic status, education level and socio-cultural context. It is supported by the perception of the respondents of FGDs and KIIs. Respondents of FGD and KII mentioned that the incidence of CEFM are high in dalit community, madheshi community, janajati

community and remote areas due to limited access to education, awareness and poor economic background. This perception supports the findings of the NMICS (2019) which reveals that the percentage of women and men age 15-19 years currently married or in union are varied in terms of rural and urban setting, education level and wealth index. One of the respondents of KII stated that:

Child Marriage cases is less observed in urban areas. More specifically, it is profound in Tharu community, Dalit community and remote areas. Similarly, it is significantly happened in the poor and uneducated classes. Most of the cases of child marriages have happened between the age of 15 and 20.

3.2 Contributing Factors of CEFM

Marriage is the legally and socially sanctioned bonding based on the full and free consent of both entering partners. The important aspect of getting married is that who initiate and arrange the marriage. In the context of Nepal, marriage is generally arranged either by the parents or by the self who enters to marriage. This is supported by the perception of the respondents of FGD and KIIs. They believed that the contributing factors of CEFM are parents will and self-initiation of marrying couples without considering any shortcomings. The details of contributing factors are explained below:

3.2.1. CEFM arranged by Parents

There are incidences of CEFM arranged by parents where children often have little or no say over whether or to whom they get married. This is supported by the perception of one fifth respondents of FGD and KII. They believed that the practice of CEFM arranged by parents are still quite common in specific ecological zone, in Terai belt. Respondents reported that parents arrange their son's and daughter's marriage in early age to reduce household expenses, burden of dowry and threat of losing social dignity. In the terai region, the inadequate housing facilities led the parents to marry their offspring in young age. Likewise, traditional norms and values often causes to arrange the marriage of boys and girls in young age. Respondents of FGD and KII in Province no 2 reveals that parents arrange cross border marriage between Nepal and India to escape from the hands of law and even to maintain *roti beti ko sambandha*. It signifies that good parenting and norm changing programs and interventions are essential in specific regions.

3.2.2 Self-Initiated Marriage

The current situation is marked with highest incidences of self-initiated marriage where both parties decide themselves to enter into married life without considering any shortcomings. This is supported by the third fourth of the respondents of FGD and KII. Majority of the respondents believed that the cases of CEFM arranged by parents have significantly decreased as parents have become more aware on the negative consequences of child marriage despite few cases in Terai belt of Nepal. Almost all the child respondents of FGD stated that the current status of CEFM is marked by the more cases of elopement. Respondents of FGD and KII reveals that young couples initiate their own marriage because of social perception against adolescence love affairs, unsafe use of social media, peer group effect, false temptation and desire to engage in sexual life. Respondents stated that young couples relocate the place of origin to get married and adopt different strategies to hide it like making it secret, avoiding party and ceremonies. This justifies that children are enjoying their rights to freedom of choice. But it is required to educate them about the well informed and conscious choice to reduce the adverse effect of CEFM.

One of the respondents of KII said that:

Children are now getting their marriage voluntarily rather than arranged from parents. One case of our village is very interesting and challenging to share. A young boy and a young girl fall into love and decided to marry. But their parents along with key stakeholders had tried to separate them not once, not twice, but thrice however not succeed each time. Finally, they need to accept the situation and their marriage.

Besides contributing factors, this study finds that both parents and young couples are adopting strategies to hide CEFM. The adopted hiding strategies are- changing the place of residence, cross boarder marriage and making it secret through avoiding party and ceremonies. More than one fourth respondents of FGD and KII mentioned that the practice of marriage by relocation within and outside the country (mostly India) is increasing. It is practiced when parents and other family members are not in support of marriage. The respondents of FGD and KII in Province no 2 reported that the marriage between India and Nepal border is significantly observed. They further added that family network and relatives are the main contributing factors for the people of Nepal and India to get cross border marriage. Some respondents stated that the cross-border marriages are in practice because of the legal age of marriage in

Hiding Strategies of CEFM Incidences

1. Making secret
2. Avoiding party, ceremonies and gatherings
3. Organizing rituals at night

Nepal and India. They said that in India, it is legal to get married after reaching the age of 18 whereas in Nepal it is 20 years so people prefer going India to get married and stay there for a couple of months and come back. Respondents of FGD and KII in Provinces other than Province no 2 reported that practice

of marrying off by changing the place of origin and residence within the country has increased. Some of the respondents of FGD and KII reported that both parents and marrying couples are adopting strategies to hide their marriage by avoiding party, ceremonies, gatherings and organizing rituals at night to escape from the hands of law. This signifies that people are aware about the legal provision and have fear about punishment against CEFM however they are practicing CEFM. So, behavior change communication interventions are essential.

3.3 High Risk Communities for CEFM

NMICS (2019) finds that people living in remote rural areas, uneducated and economically poor communities are high risk for CEFM. This is supported by the findings of this research. Survey with 604 local levels finds that 268 local levels observed a total of 4656 incidence of CEFM in FY 2020/21. Out of 268 local levels 79 (29%) are municipalities and 189 (71%) are rural municipalities. This signifies that larger communities who observed the incidence of CEFM are rural. Nepal Human Development Report 2020 unveiled by the National Planning Commission shows that the national score of HDI stood at 0.587. Its score in urban areas (0.647) surpasses that of rural areas (0.561) with a large urban-rural gap. Higher per capita income, and better access to education and health services in urban areas explain such striking disparities. Survey with 604 local levels reveals that Karnali province is marked with highest number of CEFM incidence (1772) in FY 2020/21. The score of HDI in Karnali is the lowest (0.538) one which denotes low per capita income, less access to education and health services. Similarly, Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI Report 2021) shows that multidimensional poverty rate in Nepal is 17.4 (28% at rural and 12.3% at urban). Karnali province is marked with the highest MPI rate that is 39.5 percentage. It signifies that the incidences of CEFM are high in economically poor and remote rural areas.

Majority of the respondents of FGD and KIIs reported that Dalit community, Madheshi community followed by Janajati community and remote rural communities are high risk communities for CEFM incidence. Respondents of FGD and KII in Province no. 1, Province no 2 and Lumbini Province shared that the castes like Rishidev, Urau,Aher, Kumal, Yadav, Badi, Kohar, Gupta, Sandhal, Chaudhary, Majhi, Ansari, Dom, Kharji, Mushahar and the Muslim communities have had more incidence of CEFM because of their poor economic condition, poor educational status and poor awareness level. It is supported by the HDI Report (2020) and MPI Report (2021). Both reports show that Province no 2 is marked with lowest HDI and highest MPI rate. Respondent revealed that the trend of child marriage is everywhere in the terrain but Muslim, Dom communities have relatively more cases of child marriages because of deeply rooted social action i.e. *nigaha* of children in aged 7-8 years followed by the marriage in 15-16 years. One of the respondents of KII in Bagmati province reported that Chepangs are highly vulnerable group for CEFM practice to reduce the household expenses.

Box 2: High Risk Communities for CEFM Incidence

- Remote rural communities
- Dalit Community
- Madheshi Community
- Muslim Community
- Janajati Community

More than one third respondents of FGD and KII revealed that Magar and Tamang communities belonging to Janajati groups are high risk communities because they are strict followers of rituals like *mama chela and fupu chela*. Out of 12 survivors of void marriage, more than two third of them were belongs to janajati community. Respondents of FGD and KII in Lumbini province stated that the incidence of elopement is very common in Magar community because of deeply rooted cultural traditions. Some of the respondents revealed that CEFM incidence are prevalent not only in the poor families, Dalit, Janajati and Madhesi communities but they are also prevalent in affluent families. The difference is that the information of affluent family does not come out openly, but the cases of the child marriage of the poor family comeout openly.They further stated that no one dare to file complaints against child marriage in affluent family.

These facts signify that people living in remote rural areas, belonging to Dalit, Madheshi, Muslim, Janajati communities are high risk communities for CEFM incidence. The reasons behind fell under high risks are varied as per geographical location, cultural

practice, economic status and education level. So, community specific interventions are to implement to reduce the incidence of CEFM.

3.4 Major Risk Factors of CEFM

The incidence of CEFM is resulted from a number of risk factors. They are socio-cultural, legal, technological and economic in nature. Sometimes they exist in isolated form and sometimes in integrated form to cause CEFM. This is supported by the findings of this study. As reported by the respondents of FGD and KII, socio-cultural factors associated with CEFM are social perception against adolescence love affairs and girl's mobility, social acceptance of child marriage, social ignorance, child separation as a strategy to reduce the risk of CEFM, risk of inter-caste marriage, violence against mother and daughter, controlling girls freedom to choose partners, son preference culture, family dispute and quarrelsome, lack of quality parenting, under age pregnancy and school drop-out status. Legal factors associated with CEFM are less practice of punitive action against CEFM, ignorance of CEFM by law enforcement agencies and ignorance of law and consequence on CEFM. Likewise, unsafe use of social media is identified as technological factors of CEFM. Perceiving CEFM as a solution to reducing household expenses, inadequate household facilities and burden of dowry are reported as economic factors associated with CEFM. The details of risk factors are explained in the following paragraphs.

a. Social perception against adolescent relations

Social perception towards the adolescence love affairs is one of the social factors associated with CEFM. More than half of the respondents of FGD and KII (especially child respondents) revealed that the social perception against adolescence love are the biggest reason to increase CEFM. As reported by the respondents, both children and parents have criminalized adolescence love and felt they had committed a great sin so they should get married after falling in love, ultimately they run away and get married. Respondent said some teenagers are sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex and they might be curious and want to explore adult behavior but teen romances in communities remain largely socially unacceptable therefore teens often skip dating and go straight to marriage.

b. Social perception & practice on girl's freedom

Girl's mobility is still taken as the matter of safety, security and dishonor to family in Nepal. Parents are always worried about the girl's mobility and exposure that may destroy

their honor and respect in the society. This is supported by the saying of more than one fourth of the respondents. They reported that young adolescents are increasingly likely to choose their own partner so the parents have a fear if their daughters eloped with lower caste, ethnicity and with a boy or a man of low social status. They have a fear of unintended pregnancy as the matter of shame for bringing dishonor on their family. For preserving girl's reputation and family honor parents are forcing children to get married on their choice and even at early age. This kind of social perception make girls themselves do not feel safe in the society and they readily accept that they are getting married.

c. Social acceptance of CEFM

Deeply rooted social practices and traditions ignores the negative consequences of CEFM and it helps to accept it. This is supported by the perception of more than half respondents of FGD and KII. They reported that deeply rooted social practices like *gauna garera rakhnein* Terai region, earn credit for *punya* after *kanyadan* in early age, customary culture to sit and eat when one of the family members has engaged in earning activities, brainwashing of children as they are fit to marry and elopement as a matter of pride are some of the risk factors associated with CEFM. These factors are community specific which helps to ignore the forthcoming consequences of CEFM.

d. Domestic violence

Family disputes, quarrelsome and physical and emotional violence against mother and daughter are one of the risk factors associated with CEFM. More than one third of the respondents of FGD and KII reported that children and adolescents of the family frequently having disputes, quarrelsome and violence against mother and daughter forced to choose marriage as the best option of living in order to escape from violent environment. In addition, son preference culture causes the practice of CEFM.

e. School drop-out situation of children

School drop-out situation of children is one of the risk factors associated with CEFM in Nepal. It is supported by the survey with 604 local levels and perception of more than half of the respondents of the FGD and KII. The survey with 604 local levels projected that 8.7 percentage of boys studying grade 8 to 11 are dropped out from the school and 13% of them are projected for getting married. Similarly, 12 percentage of girls studying grade 8 to 11 are dropped out and 15 % of them are projected for getting married. Respondent of FGD

and KII reported that children who drop out from school are at risk of child marriage. Those who are not excelling in school or who do not show interest in education is better off getting married. Respondent further revealed that girls' menstruation, weak in studies and inaccessible of secondary schools in remote villages are taken as a major reason for leaving the school. Interviewing with key informants confirmed; in poor families, joining the workforce is given priority rather than continuing in school. People in the community questioned; why send to school when the cost of dress, book pen and other similar expenses are to be incurred in the name of free education. It is essential to retain the girls and boys in school education to reduce the risk of CEFM.

f. *Marriage and household economy*

NMICS (2019) shows that poorest families are marked with higher rate of CEFM incidence. This is supported by the perception of almost all respondents of the FGD and KII in this study. Respondent reported that child marriage is a strategy for economic survival as families marry off their daughters at an early age to reduce their household expenses. In the poor families they are forced to do the labor work from morning to night just to have some food for them and for their children. In this situation, they are unable to share their time with their children. It lacks quality parenting. Instead, children think that marrying someone will solve the problem and so they did. Respondent stated that in economically poor family, adolescent girls fall into various temptations. They want good food, good clothes and comfortable life. They think that after marriage they will get those things and run away from home. Girls get trapped in the sweet fake dream shows by their boyfriend and others as well. Since CEFM is taken as a solution to reduce household expenses for parents and to fulfill the temptation of adolescents, it is required to design program and interventions aiming to contribute economic empowerment of the pro poor families.

g. *Inadequate housing facilities*

Housing pattern and facilities, specially in Terai region, is identified as one of the risk factors associated with CEFM. It is supported by the respondents of FGD and KII. As reported by the respondents, when family of poor economic condition have to live in a hut with single room along with children, the adult activities cannot be confidential and children follow the way as their parents did. Similarly, parents think child separation as a strategy to continue adult activities, they forced to marry their girls earlier. So, it is required to adopt proper steps to maintain household pattern to reduce CEFM.

h. Fear of dowry and tilak

Practice of dowry and tilak are also identified as risk factors associated with CEFM. More than half of the respondent reported that burden of dowry and tilak causes the incidence of CEFM. As older the girls will be more the dowry is required. Whether they send their daughters to school or not they required dowry so they don't want to invest on daughter's education at all. If the bride is younger, they need to cover lower dowry price so they did. One of the respondents (child club graduates) stated that teenager boys require a bike as an impact of modernization. So, they get married to fulfill their materialistic desire. So, it is required to design specific program to change deep rooted cultural practice and social norms to reduce CEFM in Nepal.

i. Unsafe use of social media

Current time is marked with rapid technological development which encompasses the living of children as well. Children's unsafe engagement in social and new media is also identified as risk factors associated with CEFM. More than two third respondents of the FGD and KII stated that unsafe use of social media and new media led to increase the incidence of CEFM. Social media refers to the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to stalk, talk, bully

and even intimidate a partner. Now a day's children spend a lot of time in social media and it has even increased when the schools and colleges were closed during lockdown. Respondents revealed that children of poor family have also access on mobile phone, they don't think of food but they want smart phone and keep data for the internet facilities. They further said owing to the influence of social media, several children, still in their teens, develop friendships, which turns into love, mostly before attaining

Box 3: Major Risk Factors of CEFM

- Social perception against adolescent love affairs
- Social perception against girls' mobility
- Marriage as a solution to reduce household expenses
- Inadequate housing facilities
- Child separation as a strategy to reduce CEFM
- Quarrelsome, family disputes
- Violence against mother and daughter
- Controlling girls' freedom to choose partner
- Social acceptance of child marriage
- Burden of dowry and tilak
- Unsafe use of social media and new media
- Risk of inter-cast marriage
- School drop-out status
- Under age pregnancy
- Ignorance of law and consequences on CEFM
- Son preference culture
- Lack of quality parenting
- Ignorance of CEFM by law enforcement agencies
- Less practice of punitive actions against CEFM

the legal age for marriage. The parents, who learn about this, arrange a marriage in a hurry with another boy and girl, without the consent of the child. It is essential to take policy and program measures to make child sensitive social media and new media.

j. Difficulties on legal enforcement

The Penal Code Act, 2017 and the Act Relating to Children, 2018 penalizes the practice of CEFM. Further, the Act Relating to Children, 2018 mentions about the reporting mechanism against CEFM. Still difficulties are realized in legal enforcement. This is supported by the survey with 604 local levels and the respondents of FGD and KII. The survey reveals that out of 4656 incidences of CEFM, only 382 (8%) are reported for legal actions. More than half respondent of the FGD and KII reported that there are less practices of punitive action against CEFM and law enforcement agencies ignore the incidence for further legal actions. When there is less practice of punitive action against CEFM, it rises the tendency of general people to ignore the law and consequences of CEFM which ultimately increases the incidence of CEFM. Necessary actions need to be taken for correcting difficulties on legal enforcement.

3.5 Perceived Adverse Effect of CEFM and Void Marriage upon Girls

There are various adverse impacts of CEFM on young couples. As reported by the respondents of FGD and KII, case analysis of void marriage and indicated by the survey with 604 local levels, CEFM has three different adverse impact on young couples varied in boys and girls—they are impact on physical and mental health, social impact and impact on legal rights. As the respondent perceived, complexities in pregnancy, early motherhood, high risk of uterus prolapsed, possibilities of multiple abortion and miscarriage, low birth weight of new born baby, mental stress and high risk of suicidal tendency are adverse impact of CEFM in physical and mental health. For girls, every pregnancy leads to high risks, including death during delivery and jeopardizes the health of these young mothers and their babies. Teenage girls are more susceptible than mature women to sexually transmitted disease. Social impact of CEFM reported by the respondents are high risk of early separation, disturbed marital relation, family disputes and quarrelsome, risk of losing personal freedom and dignity, risk of engaging in child labor, risk of polygyny, lack of understanding between husband and wife and risk of drop out from school education. The impact of CEFM in legal rights perceived by the respondents are hindering rights to identity and birth registration, false allegations and deprived from state facilities.

The adverse impact of CEFM in different aspects are presented in following sub headings:

a. Adverse effects on physical and mental health

CEFM has a number of adverse effects on physical and mental health of married young couples. This is supported by the perception of respondent of FGD and KII, analysis of void marriage cases and survey with 604 local levels. One of the major impacts of CEFM on physical health is complexities in early pregnancy, early motherhood and high risk of pregnancy related death. Out of 604 respondents of survey, 256 respondents and more than half respondents of the FGD and KII reported that CEFM causes complexities in early pregnancy and delivery which is one of the major factors for maternal and neonatal mortality. NMICS (2019) shows that percentage of women age 20-24 years who have had a live birth before age 15 and 18 is 1.9 and 16.9 respectively. Percentage of married women age 15-19 years who have had a live birth is 8.8 (2.6 for men) and the percentage of married women age 15-19 who had a live birth before the age 15 is 0.4 (0.3 for men). The rate is varied as per the education and wealth level. Higher the education and wealth level lower the birth rate is observed (Percentage of married women age 15-19 years who have had a live birth is 25.2 for none educated and 2.2 for higher educated, 11.3 for poorest and 3.3 at richest). This shows that the risk of early pregnancy and pregnancy related death are still prevail in Nepal. This risk is more significant in uneducated and poorest community.

Box 4 Perceived Adverse Effects of CEFM

1. Effects on physical and mental health

- Complexities in pregnancy
- Early and frequent pregnancies and forced continuation of pregnancy
- Early motherhood and possibility of more child birth bearing
- High risk of uterus prolapsed
- Abnormal child birth
- Low birth weight of new born baby
- High risk of multiple abortion and miscarriage
- Mental stress
- High risk of suicidal tendency

2. Adverse effect on social lives

- High risk of early separation
- Disturbed marital relation
- Disputes in family
- Sense of losing freedom and personal dignity
- Poor parenting and understanding between husband and wife
- Risk of drop out from school
- Risk of engaging in child labor

3. Effects on enjoyment of legal rights

- Rights to identity and birth registration
- False allegations
- Deprived from state facilities
- Case conversion

High risk of more child birth and uterus prolapsed is another adverse impact of CEFM as perceived by the respondents. Complexities in early pregnancy and delivery causes the high rate of maternal and neonatal mortality rate. As the neonatal mortality rate increases, the possibility of multiple pregnancy in early age also increases. More pregnancy in early age causes uterus prolapsed. Similarly, unsafe abortion in early ages also causes uterus prolapsed. This is perceived by the more than half respondent of the FGD and KII and 144 respondents of survey with local levels.

Weight at birth is a good indicator not only of a mother's health and nutritional status but also the newborn's chances for survival, growth, long-term health and psychosocial development. Early and child marriage causes low weight of new born baby (less than 2500gm). Low birth weight is resulted from multiple maternal factors like maternal age, education, weight, height, weight gain during pregnancy, ANC visits, parity, antepartum haemorrhage, previous abortion/low birth weight, birth spacing, tobacco/ alcohol intake and haemoglobin. Abnormal baby born and low birth weight of new born baby is also one of the adverse impacts of CEFM perceived by one fifth of the respondents of FGD and KII.

Mental stress and high risk of suicidal tendency is also one of the adverse impacts of CEFM. It is perceived by more than three fourth of the respondents of FGD and KII and 104 respondents of survey with local levels. They reported that the burden of marital responsibilities, most notably partner's sexual demands and childbearing and child-rearing, led to significant emotional distress and depression along with many suicidal cases in the community. Mental stress in parents is also so common and high because of child marriage. Respondent further stated that due to early marriages, young girls don't have the ability to deal with responsibilities, early pregnancy and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity, causing major psychological health issues like individuality interruption, loses of confidence, emotional distress and depression in adolescent girls, resulting in losing relationship confidence and ability to maintain a healthy relationship.

The analysis of 12 cases of void marriage, it is found that void marriage causes mental/psychological problem upon girls. These impacts are mental stress/mentally disturbance-a fear of her father and mother that how would they treat her after she is back home, thinking about the pitiable situation of boyfriend in the correction homes by charging a number of crimes; poor relationship with family members, detachment from society, stigmatization, problem in social adjustment. As reported by the survivor, there is high risk of suicidal tendency whose marriages are void.

b. Adverse effects of CEFM on social lives of individual

CEFM has a number of adverse effect on social lives of young couples. Social impacts are reflected in risk of early separation, disturbed marital relation, risk of polygyny, loss of personal freedom and dignity, risk of abuses and violence in family, adverse impact on education, skill and employment. The impact is varied in boys and girls. This is supported by the perception of the respondents of FGD and KII, survey with local levels and analysis of void marriages cases.

One of the major adverse effect of CEFM on social lives is the risk of early separation and polygyny which is perceived by almost all respondents of the FGD and KII and 141 respondents of survey with local levels. NMICS (2019) shows that early and child marriage causes polygynous marriage. It shows that polygynous union is higher in men than to women and spousal age difference is significant. Percentage in polygynous marriage/union of married women between 15-49 is 2.8 and between the age of 15-19 is 1.3. In the case of married men, it is 2.0 percentage for the age of 15-49 and for the age of 15-19 is 3.5 percentage respectively. Percentage of currently married women age 15-19 years whose husband or partner is more than 10 years older is 9.6.

Early and child marriage are also linked to disturbed marital relation. It creates disputes and quarrelsome in family. It is supported by the fourth fifth of the respondents of FGD and KII and 225 respondents of survey with local levels. Due to immature behavior of young couples and not being able to bear responsibilities of husband and wife, daughter in law, limited access to interaction with peer groups, immediate family members, not being able to cover the cost of basic needs creates disputes and quarrelsome in family. Deeply rooted gender norms also supporting violence against women. It is supported by the findings of NMICS (2019) which mentions that 21.9 percentage of married women age 15-19 believe a husband is justified in beating his wife in various circumstances and 24.9 percentage of married men age 15-19 believe a husband is justified in beating his wife in any circumstances.

Another adverse effect of CEFM on social lives of young couple is dropping out from the school and deprived of education. It is supported by the perception of almost all respondents of FGD and KII, 305 respondents of survey with local levels. Survey with local levels reveals that 21 percentage of early married boys and 24 percentage

of early married girls dropped their school. Analysis of 12 cases of void marriage reveals that void marriage significantly impacted upon girls for dropping out from the school. Respondents of the FGD and KII reported child marriage limits a girl's access to education due to different reasons and which impacts further in different dimensions. A young girl who is married may also have responsibilities in the home, including housework, caring for children or other relatives, be sent to work to support her husband's work, the need for unpaid household labor or be physically unable to attend school because of pregnancy. Respondents revealed that dropping out from school limits the opportunities of economic growth for both her immediate and newly extended family. Not only have the girls, younger boys married needed to earn money for the livelihood, since he missed the opportunity to continue his education, he is bound to work hazardous work or labor work. Therefore, poor children and their families rely upon child labor in order to improve their chances of attaining basic necessities. Increasing opportunities for girl's education and providing financial incentives to the poor families could be an effective strategy to eliminate the practice of girl child marriage.

CEFM has adverse effects on education, skill and employment. Those young couples who are deprived from the education lack the opportunities to develop skill and compelled to engage in unskilled labor work. This is supported by the perception of more than half of the respondents of FGD and KII. They stated lack of education is the main reason for deprivation of opportunities, lack of opportunities hinders their overall development and lack of overall development lowers the self-confidence. Especially girls are more prone to domestic violence. Because girls have less access to education and low social and economic status, they are often economically dependent on men and his family and are prone to violence.

As reported by the respondents of FGD and KII and child survivors, void marriages create a big problem for parents which ultimately reach to divorce. They revealed that they are forced to marry with a boy with a physical and mental difficulties, higher age difference if not they should leave the home. They further projected that child survivors of void marriage can engage in prostitution.

c. Adverse effect of CEFM on enjoyment of legal rights

CEFM has not only adverse effect on physical, psychological health and social life of young couples especially girls but also it hinders their citizenry rights. It creates problems in marriage and birth registration which is the prime reason to deprive from state facilities. This is supported by the perception of more than fourth fifth of the respondents of FGD and KII. They reported that CEFM hinders the rights to identity and birth registration. The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed the right of child to his/her identity with the family name and birth registration. The Act Relating to Children, 2018 mentions that every child shall have the right to have name with own identification and birth registration. Birth, Death and Other Personal Events (Registration) Act, 2033 recognize birth as the personal event that must be registered. Despite these provisions, CEFM hinders the rights to identity and birth registration. Respondents reported that both the mother and baby are being deprived of the facilities given by the state because they lacked the legal evidences like marriage certificate and birth certificate.

Despite Nepal's commitment for ending CEFM by adopting legal, policy and program measures, enforcement of law against CM and the context of enforcement are perceived as the major impact of CEFM on legal rights. More than three fourth respondents of the FGD and KII reported that prevailing laws against CM are not in enforcement. They revealed that the practice of punitive action against CEFM are very few. Because of the case of CEFM are under reported and it is even ignored by the law enforcement agencies. If the cases are reported, it converts into rape, trafficking, kidnapping cases and boys are charged for false allegations. Out of total respondents of FGD and KII, more than three fourth of them reported that the unmatched caste and social status is the major context of law enforcement for the punitive actions whereas more than one third of the respondents revealed that conversion of CEFM cases and police investigation report are another context of law enforcement for the punitive action. The cases of child marriage are converted to rape, kidnapping and trafficking cases because the legal treatment for child marriage cases is light whereas punishment for rape has severe. Respondent further revealed that complaints of child marriage are made only if caste, religion and social status do not match between married couples. Sometimes the political tension in between two families and their ego acts as another context for punitive action. The context of law enforcement is more depends on the investigation report of police and on the basis of the report of the investigation, cases

are handover to the court. The analysis of 12 cases of void marriage reveals that all the boys are charged with false allegations and kept under Child Correction Homes.

As reported by the respondents of FGD and KII, there are a number of hinderance for punitive actions against CEFM in Nepal. More than half of the respondents reported that political influences and protection are major hinderance for punitive actions against CEFM. Wherein if the perpetrator has a close relationship with a political party, they can force the victim or the person acting on her behalf to either not file a complaint or withdraw it. The cases are reconciled accordingly. Another hinderance for punitive actions are ignorance of law enforcement agencies and abuse of authority. More than half of the respondents reported that law enforcement officials are not taking prompt responses and actions against CEFM. The ignorance from law enforcement agencies further increases the tendency of CEFM in the society. Similarly, the absence of legal provisions to hold law enforcement officials accountable for denying the registration of First Information Reports or for not taking action weakens accountability for the failure to fulfill their official duties.

Respondent revealed that lack of evidence on adverse effect and inadequate communication on adverse effect of CEFM are another hinderance for punitive actions. Social acceptance of CEFM as a common practice hinders the punitive actions. Similarly, traditional norms against daughter and girls another hinderances for punitive actions against CEFM. Other hindrances reported by respondents are avoiding risk of social conflict by ignoring the incidence and not taking action against CEFM, cross border and marriage by relocation special between Nepal and India due to legal age of marriage.

Another adverse impact of CEFM on legal rights is the practice of settling case in mediation. It is supported by the more than one fifth of respondents who reported that the practice of trying to settle as many incidents as possible has challenged the effective implementation of law. Law has not yet become punishable that poses a major threat to end child marriage now in Nepal.

d. Understanding of different effects among Girls and Boys

CEFM has a number of adverse impacts on boys and girls. This is supported by the finding of survey with 604 local levels. The adverse impacts on girls are reflected in

physical and mental health like suffering from the complexities of early pregnancy, multiple pregnancy, pregnancy related death, mental stress, risk of suicidal tendency, child bearing. The adverse impacts on boys are reflected in social and economic arenas like seeking for foreign employment, risk of engaging in child labor, risk of addiction, family disputes, lacking resources for covering basic needs, inability to bear responsibilities. However, some impacts are common for both boys and girls they are school drop-out and deprivation from education, deprivation from right to identity and birth registration, mental problem. The details of adverse impact of CEFM on girls and boys are presented in table no..

Table 9: Understanding of different effects among Girls and Boys

Adverse Impact of CEFM on Girls	Number of Responses	Adverse Impact of CEFM on Boys	Number of Responses
School drop-out/Deprived of education	305	School drop-out/Deprived of education	297
Complexities in pregnancy and risk of high pregnancy	256	Involvement in foreign employment	211
Risk of violence	225	Lack of resources to cover the cost of basic needs	183
Unsafe abortion and risk of uterine prolapsed	144	Mental problem	136
Risk of early separation	141	Risk of engaging in child labor	95
Mental stress	104	Disturbed marital relations	80
Unemployment and not able to cover the cost of basic needs	99	Burden of Family responsibilities at an early age	80
Family responsibilities at an early age	86	Risk of early separation	44
No marriage and birth registration (Deprived of legal rights)	57	Lack of personal development and opportunities	35
Malnourished children and mother	38	Falling into addiction	31
Risk of Polygyny	33	Risk of Polygamy	17
Risk of pregnancy related death	32	No marriage and birth registration (Deprived of legal rights)	15
Family quarrel	32	Humiliation from society	15
Lack of personal development and opportunities	15	Weak health condition	15
Contempt from society	20	Frustration in life	13
Compulsion of a girl to hold a small baby	9	Risk of committing Domestic violence	12

Risk of engaging in child labor	9	Ignorance about women's reproductive rights	4
Burden of Dowry	9	More no. of children	3
Chance of trafficking	6	Stay in correction home	2

Multiple responses

Source: Survey with Local Levels, 2021

The table no 8 shows about the adverse impact of CEFM on young couples reported by the respondent of survey with 604 local levels. The table reveals that the significant adverse impact of CEFM on boys are school drop-out and deprived from education, involvement in foreign employment, Lack of resources to cover the cost of basic needs and mental problem. The significant adverse impact on girls are-school drop-out/deprived of education, complexities in pregnancy and risk of high pregnancy, risk of violence, unsafe abortion and risk of uterine prolapsed, risk of early separation and mental stress. Out of 604 surveyed local levels, majority of them (305 for girls and 297 for boys) reported that child marriage deprived both girls and boys from education. The table reveals that girls are more adversely affected in comparison to boys in terms of domestic violence, physical and mental health degradation, upholding family responsibilities, polygamy and family relation. It further signifies that child marriage limits young girls within domestic choir and compel to uphold reproductive and productive roles.

3.6. Preventive Measures:

The incidence of CEFM can be reduced by adopting appropriate policy and program measures. This is perceived by the respondent of the FGD and KII, survey with 604 local levels. As perceived by the respondents, CEFM can be reduced and prevented by enforcing existing law against CEFM, making accountable law enforcement agencies and capacitate them for prompt responses, strengthening child rights protection system at all levels of governance by adopting procedures, formation of child rights committee, child welfare officer and child fund. They further reported that effective program should be developed to retain the girls in school, conduction of national, provincial and local level robust campaign against CEFM, mass awareness, mobilization of community-based structure for reduction of CEFM, specific program for specific community should be designed and executed.

As perceived by the respondents of FGD and KII, more than four fifth of them reported that retention of girls in school education is the best measures to prevent them from CEFM. They revealed that family support programs are to design and execute for retaining girls in education. More than two third respondents perceived that comprehensive public awareness campaign in high-risk areas need to initiate for reduction of CEFM. Community specific programs for addressing community specific problems associated with CEFM are to design and execute in all level of governance. More than two third of the respondents reported that law enforcement agencies against CEFM are to capacitate for prompt response. They further added that due to ignorance of CEFM incidence by law enforcement agencies and less practice

of punitive actions against CEFM, the incidences of CEFM are increased so they must be accountable for the reduction of CEFM. More than half of the respondents perceived that the content about marriage, sexual and reproductive health, consequence of CEFM on young couples are to incorporate for the reduction and prevention of CEFM. They further added that child and adolescents must be aware about the adverse impact of CEFM especially about the legal punishment. More than half of the respondents reported that parents need to spent quality time with their children and need to talk about the reproductive and sexual health, adolescent love. So, they stressed that proper communication between parents and children is best way to reduce CEFM. More than one fifth respondents stated that child clubs, women groups including other community-based organizations are to strengthen for the reduction of CEFM. They further added that community-based organizations are to capacitate to report the incidence of CEFM

Box 5: Preventive Measures

- Awareness programs (in education and reproductive health, law)
- Emphasis on effective implementation of the law
- Accountability of judiciary and police officer and other key stakeholders
- Enforcement of provision of child fund, child welfare officer, child rights committee formation and capacitated for addressing child marriage issues
- Production and dissemination of audio and video PSA.(via media , posters , pamphlets)
- Effective coordination among three tiers of government
- Rehabilitation and alternative arrangements should be made, skill-based employment-oriented education
- Focus on IGA support for family
- Curriculum reform
- Effective mobilization of community-based organizations/mechanism
- Effective implementation of free and compulsory education
- News features in newspapers on the positive work done for the protection of child rights and child marriage

and to aware the community against CEFM. Almost all the respondents of FGD and KII recommended for child rights and child protection system development in all level of governance. They recommended for adoption of appropriate policy measures, strengthening child protection mechanisms, robust campaigning against CEFM, promoting good parenting education, designing community friendly norms changing program and effective service delivery for survivors.

Survey with 604 local levels reveal that appropriate policy measures-curriculum reformation, amendment of existing legal provisions on CEFM; child rights system strengthening, effective implementation-capacitate law enforcement agencies, monitoring, more practice of punitive actions against CEFM; community specific program design and execution, effective coordination among three tiers of government, mass awareness are the best way to reduce the CEFM in Nepal. The details of preventive measures reported by the respondent of survey with 604 local levels are presented in table no..

Table 10 Preventive Measures of Child Marriage

SN	Preventive Measures of CM	Number of LLs
1	Awareness programs (in education and reproductive health, law)	280
2	Effective law enforcement	206
3	Capacitate law enforcement agencies	198
4	Provision of child fund, child welfare officer, Child rights committee formation and capacitated for addressing child marriage issues	148
5	Production and dissemination of audio and video PSA(via media, posters, pamphlets)	132
6	Effective coordination among three tiers of government	78
7	Rehabilitation and alternative arrangements, skill-based employment-oriented education	74
8	Focus on IGA support at family	64
9	Curriculum reform	52
10	Effective mobilization of community-based organizations/mechanism	52
11	Compulsion of free higher education	21
12	News features in newspapers on the positive work done for the protection of child rights and child marriage	18

Multiple responses

Source: Survey with Local Levels, 2021

The table no 18 shows that out of 604 respondents of survey with local levels, majority of the respondents, 280 stated that massive awareness on existing legal provision against CEFM, its negative consequences on young couples is the best way to prevent child marriage, followed by 206 who stressed for the effective implementation of existing legal provision, 196 believed for making law enforcement agencies and stakeholders more capacitated to response the incidence of CEFM, 148 reported for the establishment of child fund, child welfare officer and child rights committee at all local levels, further followed by 132 for the production and distribution of audio and video PSA through different medias are effective measures to prevent from child marriage. Other measures reported by the respondents of the survey are effective coordination among three tiers of the government, income generation support for family, skill based and employment-oriented education, curriculum reform, mobilization of community based organization, wider sharing of best practices.



CHAPTER-4

Discourse on Child, Early and Forced Marriage

With substantive analysis of research findings, the followings are identified as key concern of discourse for the prevalence of CEFM in Nepal.

The denial of freedom of marriage lead to CEFM

International human rights treaties guarantee the right of all individuals to enter into marriage with the 'free' and 'full' consent of both parties and 'full of age' at marriage. In the context of Nepal, as per the National Civil (Code) Act, 2017 marriage is legally defined as a permanent, inviolable and holy social and legal bond, which is based on free consent of the persons getting married and established to start conjugal and family life between a man and a woman. By this, men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. These legal instruments guarantee the people's freedom to conclude a marriage, establish a family and spend a conjugal life.

The freedom of concluding marriage is reflected in the rights to choose and not to choose the life partner, rights to choose process and rights to choose the time. The denial of these freedom caused to happen CEFM in Nepal. While marriage is an age-old practice, the institution has evolved as the needs of society have shifted. Available literature shows that views regarding the acceptability of couples of different religions, race, and now gender have changed. The process involved for concluding marriage is changed. Despite this evolution, the concept of marriage has consistently been valued by society and the legal system. The legal system has ensured the freedom of marriage however the social system denied it. The findings of this study shows that young

couples got child, early and forced marriage because they felt that their rights to choose life partner, rights to choose marriage process and rights to choose time for marriage has been denied. The social perception has criminalized young and adolescents love affairs specially between so called unmatched religion, class and caste. The choice of a partner whether within or outside marriage lies within the exclusive domain of each individual. Intimacies of marriage lie within a core zone of privacy, which is inviolable. The absolute right of an individual to choose a life partner is not in the least affected by matters of faith, caste, religion.

Marriages in Nepal, much like in the rest of South Asia, are overwhelmingly endogamous and the decision of parents and kin takes precedence over individual choices and desires.¹ When the couple crosses caste and ethnic boundaries, however, parents and kin often take it to be transgression of family and community values. Interfaith marriages, similarly, face severe problems² While recognizing different forms of marriage, classical Hindu texts and oral traditions in South Asia depict love marriages as instances of transgression that threaten group solidarity. Since intercaste and interethnic courtships and marriages complicate the mechanism of the social reproduction of caste system, patriarchy and unequal gender relations, parents, kin and communities fiercely resist these practices despite the fact that the caste system has been officially abolished for a long time. Family honor and prestige are thought to be at stake when a couple, especially a woman, makes an independent marital choice³ Cases of intermarriage thus offer a unique opportunity to investigate emerging subjectivities and agency among the younger generation. Narratives of love and intermarriage also offer a commentary on the rapidly changing economic, social and cultural landscape of South Asia.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) is weakened by CEFM

As per the existing international⁴ and national legal instruments including the Constitution and acts, sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to sexuality and the reproductive

1 (Donner 2002; Goli, Singh, and Shekher 2013; Mody 2007; Uberoi 1998; Vaid 2014).

2 (Dasgupta 2007; De Neve 2016; Verma and Sukhrmani 2017)

3 (Chakravarti 2005; Chowdhry 2004; Grover 2009; Mody 2002).

4 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Platform for Action of the International Conference of Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Lancet Commission and Guttmacher

system. It implies that individuals are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life free of coercion or discrimination, the capability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. In order to enjoy good SRH, individuals need to be able to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, which include: freedom to decide whether, when and with whom to engage in sexual relationships; freedom of sexual expression; freedom to enter into marriage with consent, to found a family, and to choose the timing, spacing and number of children to have; to have access to information and means to achieve their reproductive goals, and; to be free from discrimination, degrading treatment, coercion and violence.

Child marriage affects both boys and the girls, however, it disproportionately affects girls' ability to enjoy their rights and freedoms, especially due to the serious risks of sexual and reproductive harms associated with CEFM. The current research found that when girls marry as children they are denied the ability to make critical choices about their futures, and are thereby denied their basic SRR. The question of when and with whom to begin sexual activity is often decided for them in violation of their basic sexual and reproductive rights. The desire to control female sexuality and preserve virginity before marriage is found to be one of the main motivating factors behind parents' decision to marry their daughter early. The research finds that negative attitudes towards adolescent sexuality are one of the main barrier girls face in accessing sexual and reproductive health services, as service providers often refuse to provide contraception, abortion, or HIV prevention and testing services to people who they deem too young to be sexually active.

According to the Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), 47% of women who first had sex before age 15 and 29% of women who first had sex between ages 15-19 have stated that their initial experience was forced and against their will, and a majority of these cases occurred within marriage. Child marriage therefore denies girls the right to make fundamental decisions about their own sexuality and health. In sum up, the sovereignty of reproductive health and rights are found to be weakened by CEFM.

Economic opportunities of household and CEFM are proportionally related

The practice of CEFM is associated with economic freedom and freedom of opportunities. Lack of economic freedom and freedom of opportunities causes the incidence of CEFM which ultimately limits the opportunities and freedoms for

youngly married couples. The current research finds the practice of CEFM is taken as a strategy to reduce household expenses and to reduce the cost of dowry and tilak in one side and on the other side women and girls married as children are often denied educational and employment opportunities, which undermines their self-development and negatively impacts their lives, leaving them economically dependent, vulnerable, and disempowered.

When boys and girls are married early, their educational trajectory is altered. Formal schooling and education often cease, which means they stop acquiring knowledge and skills that would carry them through life, including as productive members of their households and communities. They are also removed from the social network and support structure that schools provide. The earlier a girl marries, the more likely it is that she will have a low level of schooling.

The economic impacts of girls' and boys' reduced educational attainment can be measured in terms of reduced earnings and productivity. Depriving a girl of the opportunity to learn limits her prospects for employment and her ability to gain useful skills or vocational training for the formal labor sector, inevitably impacting their lifelong earning potential. But in addition, potential shifts in household consumption away from economically beneficial investments tend to be observed with lower levels of education. Not only does lack of education attainment deprive individual girls of voice and agency and decrease their learning and earning potential in the long term, but lack of formal education also has intergenerational effects—impacting her children's education attainment, nutritional status, and physical health.

Child marriage may influence labor force participation in a number of ways, including through a reduction in expected returns from participation in paid employment due to lower educational attainment and an increase in the relative value of unpaid household work stemming from higher lifetime fertility. A lack of engagement in the labor force may have long-term implications not only for women and their families, but in addition at the aggregate level it may significantly reduce economic growth in communities or societies

CEFM can be controlled by promoting democratic norms and values in Family

The practice of CEFM is linked to the absence of democratic norms and values in Nepalese family. The current research finds that girl's mobility is still taken as the matter of safety, security and dishonor to family in Nepal. This is why because of absence of mutual trust, cooperation, respect, and communication. Parents are always worried about the girl's mobility and exposure that may destroy their honor and respect in the society. They are always in unseen fear of losing honor, respect despite focusing on inter-generational communication, democratic parenting and mutual understanding.

The current family is characterized by democratic parenting. Rather than the parent running the show (authoritarian) or the child steering the family (permissive), democratic household are based on respect for both the parent and the child. This style represents a consistent path forward, rather than inconsistent swinging from side to side. It is a parenting style, derived from the ideas of Alfred Adler, in which the parent guides the child's development in an accepting but steady manner and fosters a climate in which *cooperation, fairness, equality, and mutual respect* between parent and child are assumed. The mutually respectful, democratic approach offers what Dr. Betty Lou Bettner and Amy Lew (authors of “Raising Kids Who Can”) call “The Crucial C’s.” The Crucial C’s include a sense of *Connection*, feeling *Capable*, having *Courage* and feeling like he or she *Counts*. Every child craves the Crucial C’s.

Democratic family is characterized by focusing on making the child understand the rules, instead of punishing them when they break the rules (focus on rules), encourages the child to make choices in their daily life which are followed up with consequences and children thus associate the consequences with their choice (encourage choices), rewarding the child’s positive behavior when they follow the rules and make a good choice (positive reinforcement), responding to the child’s needs and motivate them to achieve their goals (responsiveness and motivation), treating the child as an equal so they do not force their opinions on them but they have a discussion like they do with an adult (equality and positivity), and are affectionate and understanding and nurture their children with care (love, warmth, and understanding).

In sum up, mothers and fathers are confidants, advisors and companions for their children instead of the classical persons of respect in democratic family. In a democracy,

our task as parents is to help children to find their own way, because growing up today means navigating your way through a jungle of possibilities and finding your own path, while at the same time helping to shape society.



CHAPTER-5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The current study commissioned by NCRC was intended to design effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM and impact of void marriage upon the young couples especially on girls. The objectives of this research were to find out the prevalence and triggering factors of CEFM in Nepal, to know the impact of void marriage upon the girls, to identify the effective and efficient program to reduce CEFM in Nepal. As this study is intended to find the prevalence, contributing factors of CEFM and impact of void marriage upon the girls, both analytical as well as descriptive research designs were used. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Primary data for this study was collected through Survey, Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant Interview, and case analysis to meet the stated objectives. The draft report was consulted with key governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations/networks at federal level and manipulated accordingly.

A National Study on Status of CEFM and Impact of Void Marriage upon Girls has the following conclusions:

The incidence of CEFM is in decreasing trend

The incidence of CEFM is still significantly prevails in Nepal but in decreasing trend. The survey with 604 local levels reveals that a total of 4656 incidence of CEFM was observed in 268 local levels till April 2021. It is found that Karnali province is marked with highest number of CEFM incidence (1772) and number of local levels observed CEFM incidence (70/79) followed by Bagmati Province (761), Lumbini (738) Province and Sudurpaschim (627) Province respectively. Province 1 is marked with lowest number of CEFM incidence (78) and number of local levels (23/137) observed CEFM incidence. Province no 2 is marked with all the local levels surveyed

are observed the CEFM incidence. The majority of the respondents of FGDs and KIIs (89%) reported that the incidence of CEFM is still significant in Nepal. The number of incidences observed 268 local levels in FY 2020/21 is lesser by 1486 than of FY 2019/20 that is 6142. It signifies that the trend of CEFM is in decreasing. It supports the findings of NMICS (2019) which shows that the percent of married people of the age group 20 to 24 years are married under 15 and 18 years are decreased from 24.5 at 2014 to 12.8 at 2019 and from 37 at 2014 to 22.4 at 2019 respectively.

Most of the cases of CEFM goes under reported.

The research finds that most of the cases of CEFM goes under reported. Survey with local levels shows that out of 4656 cases of CEFM incidence observed in FY 2020/21, only 382 (8%) cases are reported to concern agencies-police, local judicial committee, child rights committee and Child Helpline 1098 for legal actions. Child Helpline 1098, a child protection mechanism operated in 18 stations managed a total of 316 cases of child marriage (96 girl and 13 boys are rescued from being married and 207 cases of child marriage are stopped) in FY 2020/21. The incidences of CEFM are under reported because of social ignorance, avoidance of social conflict, less practice of punitive action, limited knowledge among law enforcement agencies about their roles and responsibilities, family members themselves are engaged in committing the offense and thus are liable to punishment and girls are generally unwilling to seek legal remedies.

There is wider prevalence of CEFM

This study finds that there is wider prevalence of CEFM incidence in terms of ecological region, caste, economic status, education level and socio-cultural context. NMICS (2019) finds that people living in remote rural areas, uneducated and economically poor communities are high risk for CEFM. Survey with 604 local levels finds that 268 local levels observed a total of 4656 incidence of CEFM in FY 2020/21. Out of 268 local levels 79 (29%) are municipalities and 189 (71%) are rural municipalities. This signifies that larger communities who observed the incidence of CEFM are rural. The incidences of CEFM are high in economically poor and remote rural areas. It is supported by the perception of the respondents of FGDs and KIIs. Respondents of FGD and KII mentioned that the incidence of CEFM are high in dalit community, madheshi community, janajati community and remote rural areas due to limited access

to education, awareness and poor economic background. This perception supports the findings of the NMICS (2019) which reveals that the percentage of women and men age 15-19 years currently married or in union are varied in terms of rural and urban setting, education level and wealth index

CEFM practices are under cover

Marriage is the legally and socially sanctioned bonding based on the full and free consent of both entering partners. The important aspect of getting married is that who initiate and arrange the marriage. In the context of Nepal, marriage is generally arranged either by the parents or by the self who enters to marriage. This is supported by the perception of the respondents of FGD and KIIs. They believed that the contributing factors of CEFM are parents will and self-initiation of marrying couples without considering any shortcomings.

Besides contributing factors, this study finds that both parents and young couples are adopting strategies to hide CEFM. The adopted hiding strategies are- changing the place of residence, cross boarder marriage and making it secret through avoiding party and ceremonies.

Social, economic, technological and legal factors collectively promote the incidence of CEFM

Social, economic, technological and legal factors collectively promote the incidence of CEFM. As reported by the respondents of FGD and KII, socio-cultural factors associated with CEFM are social perception against adolescence love affairs and girl's mobility, social acceptance of child marriage, social ignorance, child separation as a strategy to reduce the risk of CEFM, risk of inter-caste marriage, violence against mother and daughter, controlling girls freedom to choose partners, son preference culture, family dispute and quarrelsome, lack of quality parenting, under age pregnancy and school drop-out status. Legal factors associated with CEFM are less practice of punitive action against CEFM, ignorance of CEFM by law enforcement agencies and ignorance of law and consequence on CEFM. Likewise, unsafe use of social media is identified as technological factors of CEFM. Perceiving CEFM as a solution to reducing household expenses, inadequate household facilities and burden of dowry are reported as economic factors associated with CEFM.

CEFM adversely effects the physical and mental health, social lives and enjoyment of legal rights of individual

There are various adverse effects of CEFM on young couples in personal and socio-economic domain. CEFM has three different adverse effect on young couples varied in boys and girls- they are effect on physical and mental health, social lives and effect on the enjoyment of legal rights. As the respondent perceived, complexities in pregnancy, early motherhood, high risk of uterus prolapsed, possibilities of multiple abortion and miscarriage, low birth weight of new born baby, mental stress and high risk of suicidal tendency are adverse impact of CEFM in physical and mental health. For girls, every pregnancy leads to high risks, including death during delivery and jeopardizes the health of these young mothers and their babies. Teenage girls are more susceptible than mature women to sexually transmitted disease. The adverse effects of CEFM on social lives of individual as reported by the respondents are high risk of early separation, disturbed marital relation, family disputes and quarrelsome, risk of losing personal freedom and dignity, risk of engaging in child labor, risk of polygyny, lack of understanding between husband and wife and risk of drop out from school education. The adverse effects of CEFM on the enjoyment of legal rights as perceived by the respondents are hindering rights to identity and birth registration, false allegations and deprived from state facilities.

5.2 Recommendations

This research uncovers that the denial of marriage freedom leads to CEFM. Such freedoms are reflected in the rights to choose and not to choose the life partner, rights to choose marriage process and rights to choose the time for marriage conclusion. Similarly, the practice of CEFM weakens the sexual and reproductive health rights of young girls and women. When women and girls marry at young age, their sovereignty to sexual and reproductive rights become weak and fell under triple jeopardy. Likewise, economic freedom and opportunities of household and CEFM are proportionally related to each other. It further discusses that the promotion of democratic norms and values in Nepalese family can prevent CEFM. Despite a constitutional and legal commitment to end the practice of CEFM in Nepal, it is realized that there is difficulties in legal enforcement which hinders the enjoyment of legal rights. In order to reduce the incidence and effects of CEFM, this study suggests following recommendations.

Child Rights and Child Protection System Strengthening (To report, respond and reduce the incidence and effects of CEFM, child rights and child protection system is to strengthen at all level of governance and following actions need to be taken)

- Formation and strengthening Child Rights Committee in local level for addressing

the issues of child protection including CEFM.

- Provision of child welfare officer in all local level for facilitating child rights promotion and child protection work including CEFM
- Child Helpline 1098 service need to expand and strengthen to manage the cases of CEFM
- Provision of child fund in all level of governance for protection management of survivors
- Orientation to the members of Child Rights Committee on their roles and responsibilities to report, respond and reduce the incidence of CEFM.
- Incorporation of CEFM reduction activities within the annual planning and budget system.
- Ensuring multi-sectoral engagement and collaboration for the reduction of CEFM
- Promotion of good practices on CEFM reduction at all level of governance

Facilitation for Policy Formation and Enforcement

(To reduce the incidence and effects of CEFM, necessary amendment in existing legal instruments, formulation of strategies and action plan in province and local levels and its effective enforcement is required)

- Amendment of National Strategy to End Child Marriage, 2015 as per the thrust of federalism and the Act Relating to Children, 2018.
- Formulation of Strategies and Costed Action Plan to End CEFM in province and local levels as per the national strategies.
- Law enforcement agencies are to capacitate to have prompt responses against CEFM.
- Organizations of interactions, trainings, workshop for multiple stakeholders about their roles and responsibilities in the reduction of CEFM.
- Massive awareness on the legal provisions against CEFM through audio and video PSA, boosting short messages in social media and through IEC materials
- Facilitation and organization of national campaign to end CEFM in all level of governance
- Incorporation of 'marriage' and 'family' rather than 'child marriage' in school curriculum

Promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights

(To promote sexual and reproductive health rights of girls and to reduce the adverse impact of CEFM, following actions are recommended)

- Empowerment of girls to decide for themselves when and with whom to have sex, when to marry and bear children, to negotiate safe sexual practices, to access appropriate and quality sexual and reproductive health services, and ultimately to enjoy better sexual and reproductive health.
- Design and execute effective and efficient program for adolescent relating to the education, employment and skill development like continuity of education, or reducing the school drop rate of girl child, promoting the reproductive and sexual health education among adolescents, providing income generating skills and activities enhancing the employability of adolescents in the existing market, etc.
- Working with adolescents and young people including boys to understand and build peer support on the idea of preventing all forms of child marriage in community.
- Ensuring the adolescent friendly rehabilitation service, law enforcement, promoting reintegration in society, etc
- School Curriculum reformation (sexual and reproductive health rights) in primary level
- Changing gender inequitable social norms around adolescent sexuality and use of contraception and other SRH services.
- Providing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) provides girls (and boys) with accurate information about sexual and reproductive health, enabling them to develop the critical life skills needed to make healthy, safe choices, which reduce risky sexual behaviours that lead to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

1. Expanding economic freedom and opportunities in Family

(To expand the economic freedom and opportunities in household for the reduction of adverse effect of CEFM, following actions are recommended)

- Design and execution of girls' retention program at school
- When girls are dropping out from the school due to low economic status of the family, such families need to identify and provided with IGA support.
- Expand the economic opportunities and freedom at family
- Ensuring equal access to education, health care, decent work
- Participation in decision making process

5. Promotion of democratic norms and values in Family (To promote democratic norms and values in family for the reduction of adverse impact of CEFM, following actions are recommended)

- Train the family members about the democratic norms and values
- Promote inter-generational communication and democratic parenting
- Link socialization process with marriage
- Encourage children to participate in family decision making about movies, playing games, or other family activities.
- Engaging children in group decision making helps them learn skills essential for a democracy, like cooperation, compromise, negotiation, and consensus building.
- Encourage children's sense of justice by talking with them about the unfairness they encounter in daily life and sharing our feelings about it. Exploring justice and injustice within our own families helps children learn to value, and advocate for, fairness.
- Encourage dialogue and discussion through dinner table conversations and lively disagreement about current events. Even young children can be encouraged to express their opinions about the world. Respecting our children's point of view, and respectful disagreement, are good ways to help children expand their horizons, learn to defend their own ideas, and remain open to new information and ideas.
- Promote the parent-child relationship is bases on openness, acceptance, affection and warmth
- Orient children for proper and safe use of social medias



References

- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2020). Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Finding Report. Kathmandu: Author.
- Girls Not Brides (2020). SDGs and Child Marriage.
- K. Sekine and M. E. Hodgkin*, “Effect of child marriage on girls’ school dropout in Nepal: Analysis of data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014,” pp. 1–13, 2017.
- A. Bajracharya and S. Amin*, “Poverty, Marriage Timing, and Transitions to Adulthood in Nepal,” *Stud. Fam. Plann.*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 79–92, 2012.
- Ministry of Health and Population. (2016). Nepal demographic and health survey. Kathmandu: Author
- National Child Rights Council. (2020), State of Children in Nepal. Lalitpur: Author
- Donner 2002; Goli, Singh, and Shekher 2013; Mody 2007; Uberoi 1998; Vaid 2014. Dasgupta 2007; De Neve 2016; Verma and Sukhramani 2017 Chakravarti 2005; Chowdhry 2004; Grover 2009; Mody 2002.

Guiding questions for FGD

Sex

Age Group

Location

1. What is the situation/Volume of child marriage in your community?
2. What was in the past?
3. How has the pattern changed?(New Practices)
4. Are there any religious /culture barriers?
5. Who are the most vulnerable group? Why?
6. What are the vulnerability factors (causes that influence the risk of Child Marriage)
7. What do you think are the triggers factors(risk factors that actually supports CM to happen) to get married in your community?
8. Do modern devices like mobiles, internet encourage child marriage? Why?
9. In your opinion who are responsible for CM happening in this region?
10. What are the consequences /effects of child marriage in your community?
 - Physical/Psychological impact
 - Economic Impact
 - Education Impact
 - Social Impact
11. What kind of impact do you see regarding the current legal provisions on child marriage? Can you share some examples or else can you discuss on the few case study regarding impact of legal provisions on child marriage.
 - Related to marriage certificate
 - Related to citizenship
 - Related to birth certificate of children
 - Related to criminalization/de criminalization
12. Impact of void marriage upon girls?

13. Does anyone reports to you regarding CM? If yes, how many till date?
14. Have you noticed any punishment or legal treatment against child marriage?
15. What are the enabling factors for punitive action?
16. Are there any barriers to follow the legal action against child marriage?Why? Why not?
17. What can be done from your agency in preventing child marriage?
18. What will be the roles of children in preventing child marriage?
19. What will be the roles of parent in preventing child marriage?
20. What will be the roles of school in preventing child marriage?
21. What should be done by local government / provincial government and federal government to prevent the child marriages?
22. Do you have any recommendations for us regarding
 - Policy
 - Service
 - Programs
 - Norms changing

Ending Questions

This question asks participants to reflect on the entire discussion and then offer their positions or opinions on topics of central importance to the researchers.

1. "Suppose that you had one minute to talk to the governor on merit pay, the topic of today's discussion. What would you say?" or "Of all the things we discussed, what to you is the most important?"
2. Summary question After the brief oral summary the question asked is: Is this an adequate summary?"
3. Final question : The moderator reviews the purpose of the study and then asks the participants: "Have we missed anything?"

Guiding questions for KII

Name of the Interviewer

Phone no.

Name of the Interviewee

Portfolio : (Institution / Designation)

Date:

Time:

- 1) What is the volume /practice of child marriage in this region?
- 2) Who are the most vulnerable group?
- 3) What are the major causes of child marriage?
- 4) In your opinion, who are responsible for child marriage happening in this region; child, parents, societal/cultural practice, peer, or anything else?
- 5) How do you find the role of technology and social media in triggering early marriage?
- 6) What kind of effect have you observed among the adolescents after early marriage? Could you please tell us in detail about the impacts of child marriage on their health (physical, mental and social), education and economy?
- 7) What is the Enforcement status of child marriage related laws in Nepal ?
- 8) Reasons for effective enforcement and less enforcement?
- 9) What in your views are the major barriers in effective implementation of the laws addressing child marriage in Nepal? What can be done to overcome those barriers?
- 10) What could be the impact on the life of both boys and girls due to the enforcement and non enforcement ?
- 11) What laws and strategies has really worked and what mistakes have commonly been made? Why do you feel that way?

- 12) Does any child report herself/himself to you regarding their early marriage till the date? If yes, how many children informed or report to you for legal action? (skip)
- 13) Have you noticed any impact of legal provisions on child marriage? If yes what are they .
- 14) What do you think is the best approach when crafting policy to address child marriage?
- 15) What kind of structural and functional (legal/policy related) difficulties do you have to deal with while working for child marriage prevention? And What changes are needed to improve the current situation?
- 16) What can be done from your Agency?
- 17) What should the government do?(Local / Province / Federal)
- 18) Do the prevailing activities, policies, programs are effective to control child marriage in this province? What do you think? If no, what are your suggestion and recommendation for policy, programs, and activities?
- 19) Other key issues to explore
- 20) Further references / and sources of information
- 21) Additional stakeholders/programmes/key informant
- 22) Particular information regarding province/district

Content Analysis of cases of void marriage

Target Group: Cases of early marriage since last 5 years & unrecognized cases of early marriage since last 5 years

		Reasons
Socio demographic information		
Age		
Ethnicity		
Age at marriage		
Permanent address		
Educational status		
Religion		
Types of marriage	Self-initiated marriage	
	Family arranged marriage	
	Relative initiated marriage	
	Friend initiated marriage	
Trigger factors to get married	Following the village culture and social pressure	
	Financial issues	
	Lack of access to high schools	
	Tend to marry young boys in early ages	
	Freedom from undesirable rigid rules of parents applying to girls	
	Tired of studying continuously	
	Pre-marital sex & unintended pregnancy	
	Technological factors/Influence of social media	
	False temptation/peer influence	
	Love Affairs	
	Support household chores	
	Others..	

Impact of child marriage		
Impact on health	Psychological problem	
	Increased of STDs	
	Uterus Prolapse	
	Miscarriage	
	Still Birth	
	Bleeding from vagina/abnormal bleeding	
	Rashes around vagina	
	Irregular menstruation	
	Health risk for children	
	Death during childbirth	
	Others	
Impact on Education	Poor environment to study	
	Poor concentration on study due to hard work	
	Getting less time to study	
	Dropped out from school	
	Could not educate children	
	others	
Impact on Social context	Poor family relationship	
	Poor leadership	
	Lack of socialization/social isolation	
	Stigma in society	
	Second marriage/Polygamy	
	Engagement in household chores	
	others	
Impact on Economy	Lack of money	
	Dependency	
	Jobless	
	Difficult livelihood	
	Low income	
	Increase in expenses	
	others	

Others	Sexual Violence	
	Bonded labor	
	Freedom and leadership	
Impact of legal provisions on child marriages		
	Did you have difficulties in access to citizenship	
	If there was a problem in Marriage registration	
	Birth certificate of childrens	
	Parental property rights	
	Criminalization	
	De criminalization	
	Social stigma & mental distress associated with putting family members in prison	
	Economic stresses on families (Penalty/reclaiming dowry payment)	
	others	
	If you got any support from authorities / Organizations. What kind of assistance did you get?	
	Have you informed any authorities regarding forced marriages?	
	If yes, could you please share the name of authorities?	
	Did you get any support from organizations working on child marriage prevention sector?	
	If yes, where did you get support?	
	Did you find support from government authorizes (Federal, Provincial and local level)	
	If yes, what kind support did you get?	
Recommendations		
Policy Recommendations		
Service recommendations		
Programme recommendations		
Norms changing recommendations		

Guiding questions for survey with local level

Province:

District:

Local level:

Contact Person:

Designation:

Contact No.

1. How many incidents of child marriage took place at your local level in last fiscal year?
Ans: -
2. How many incidents of child marriage have been stopped at your local level in last fiscal year?
Ans:
3. How many incidents of child marriage had taken place at your local level till mid-April of current fiscal year ?
Ans:
4. How many incidents of child marriage have been stopped at your local level till mid-April of current fiscal year?
Ans:
5. How many incidents of child marriage have been reported at your local level till mid-April of current fiscal year?
Ans:
6. What is the number and percentage of boys and girls dropping out of school from class 8 to 11 at your local level?
Ans:
7. What is the estimated percentage of marriages for boys and girls dropping out of school from class 8 to 11 at your local level?
Ans:
8. What is the estimated percentage of married boys and girls who drop out of school at your local level?
Ans:
9. What problems do girls face due to child marriage at your local level?
Ans:
10. What problems do boys face due to child marriage at your local level?
Ans:
11. What should be done to increase the effectiveness of existing legal, policy and programmatic provisions for reducing child marriage?
Ans:

Table of survey response

S.N	Questionnaire/ Indicators	Total	Province No. 1	Province No. 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudoor paschim
1	Incidents of child marriage that occurred in the last fiscal year	6142	108	393	1032	299	885	2573	852
2	Incidents of child marriages stopped last year	1177	48	40	293	84	179	456	77
3	Incidents of child marriage that occurred till mid-April of the current fiscal year	4656	78	359	761	321	738	1772	627
4	Incidents of child marriage stopped till mid-April of the current fiscal year	956	45	35	325	41	149	311	50
5	Incidents of child marriage have been reported till mid-April of the current fiscal year	382	59	18	44	22	72	132	35
6	Percentage of boys school dropouts from class 8 to 11	8.7%	10.6%	12.8%	3.7%	4.5%	7.2%	19.7%	2.5%
7	Percentage of girls school dropouts from class 8 to 11	11.7%	11.6%	23.2%	3.9%	4.5%	10.9%	25.7%	2.6%
8	Percentage of child marriage by a boy dropping out of school from class 8 to 11	12.6 %	16.2%	13%	7.7%	4.6%	24.3%	18.3%	4.5%
9	Percentage of child marriage by a girl dropping out of school from class 8 to 11	15.1%	21.4%	16.8%	8.6%	4.6%	30.2%	20.2%	4%
10	Estimated percentage of boys leaving school after getting married	20.5%	55.2%	12.4%	16.6%	6.7%	29.5%	18.9%	3.9%
11	Estimated percentage of girls leaving school getting married	23.6%	62.1%	17.3%	16.9%	7.9%	35.1%	21.5%	4.2%
12	Problems faced by boys due to child marriage								
13	Problems faced by girls due to child marriage								
14	How to increase the effectiveness of legal and policy provisions related to child marriage reduction								

