

Workshop on CMRA 2017 implementation

Faith leaders & informal performers unite for the #EndChildMarriage



Poverty, ideas of family honor, social norms, customs and religious beliefs are factors that could force girls into child marriages. Marriages can rob girls of their childhood, compromise their development and put them at high risk of early and complicated pregnancies. They often pay a heavy price in not getting an education or access to proper health care and economic opportunities. Religious beliefs and extreme poverty contribute to the high rates of child marriage in Bangladesh. Preventing Child Marriage, Bangladesh Government passed a law to resistant child marriage with high commitment getting zero. Faith leaders spicily who are informally engaged with marriage events, they have critical role to implement child marriage law with various roles and responsibilities.

In this context, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF) takes an initiative under Girls Advocacy Alliance Project to organize such workshop with informal marriage performers and matchmakers supported by Plan International Bangladesh. Workshop on 'Child Marriage Resistant Act 2017: Our Responsibility and Action' was held on 15th May 2018 at officers Club Auditoriums, Agoiljhara sub-district of Barisal. The workshop aimed at identifying informal marriage performers, faith leaders and matchmaker's roles to implementing CMRA 2017 and aware them about punishment. Overall, build their strong commitment to stopping child marriage with social responsibilities.



Dipika Rani Sen, Women Affairs Officer have presided this workshop while chief guest was Nasima Akter Joly, General Secretary, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCF). Jashim Uddin Sardar, Upozila Vice Chairman of Agoljhara, Nazrul Islam, Upozila Secondary Education Officer, Mohadeb Basu, President, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, Agoiljhara Upozila unit, Peyara Begum, member, Barisal Jela Parishad, Kajol Das Gupta, General Secretary of Agoiljhara Unnyan Parishad has addressed at the workshop.

Meher Afroz Mita, General Secretary, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, Barisal District unit have presented one power point presentation on Girls Advocacy Alliance project background and summary of `Child Marriage Resistant Act 2017. Youth Activist Sohanur Rahman has facilitated this workshop. **55 informal marriage performers, registers, religious and community leaders** has actively participated this workshop with their valuable opinions and insights. Participants were divided 4 groups and chalk-out their specific roles to implement CMRA 2017.



After this group work, they have presented it. In open discussion session, they have made strong commitment to end child marriage through their strong participation. In the discussion, Participants highlighted some loopholes like fake birth certificates and marriage by notary public's issues.



As Chief Guest Ms. Nasima Akter Joly, General Secretary, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF) has urged to the faith leaders, informal marriage performers and matchmakers to follow the rules of the Child Marriage Resistant Act 2017. If be careless, the will be punished under this law. She cordially requested to build a social moment to prevent child marriage and ensure rights of girl child including access to

education, health and wellbeing.

Mr Jashim Uddin Sarder, Upozila Vice Chairman of Agoljhara highlighted the political will and commitment favors to build child marriage free communities. He has mentioned that the rate of Child Marriage is decreasing day by day in this upozila. Now the main challenge is build Agoiljhra as child marriage free upozila. We will do everything to end child marriage and promoting girls right, he told.

Discussion Points of the Workshop:-

- Background of CMRA 2017 and GAA project
- Roles and Responsibilities of informal marriage performers and matchmakers to implementing CMRA 2017
- Highlighting punishment motioned at CMRA 2017.

Workshop Methodology:

- Power Point Presentation
- Group works and presentations
- Participatory Open discussion.



Participants identified Roles

Muslim Religion (Group 1 & 2)

- Don't marry girl child, organize or attend at any child marriage event.
- Viewing Child Marriage event, giving awareness message, protest heart and soul.
- Unable to end child marriage event, leaving venue and inform responsible authorities, also call to help line 109 to end.
- Highlighting negative impacts of Child Marriage and CMRA at public conversations.
- Delivering awareness message at Jumma (Friday) Prayer against Child Marriage
- Aware students, guardians and Matchmaker on harmful impacts of child marriage and law mentioned punishments.
- Presenting CMRA and highlighting the punishment at public and religious functions.
- Social Campaigning, Leafleting, mike announcement, Courtyards meeting and set up billboards.

Hindu Religion (Group 3)

- Don't marry child bride and protest to others in the community.
- Learn and share with followers (local peoples) about punishment which mentioned at Child Marriage Resistant Act (CMRA) 2017.
- Spread negative impacts of Child Marriage with communities.
- In prayer assembly, deliver message against Child Marriage highlighting CMRA and punishment.
- Take strong position against Child Marriage in front of social or political power of influential personalities.

Christian Religion:: (Group 4)

- Organize workshop and seminar on CMRA 2017 at Christian communities.
- Give advice to avoid child marriage through prayers ceremony.
- Aware community peoples at household visits.

Outcomes:

- Participants has learned about CMRA and sensitized to punishment for arrange child marriage event.
- Participants have indentified their roles and responsibilities to implement CMRA
- Participants take strong commitment to play their roles to fulfilling responsibilities.

Learning's ::

- Informal marriage performers' especially religious leaders and matchmakers has critical role to end child marriage.
- Faith leaders can easily motivate the community peoples to preventing child marriage.

Challenges

- Lack of proper time to conducting workshop.
- Social and religious norms with backdated perspective of participants.

Recommendations

- Needed more workshops with action plans for Informal marriage performers' and matchmakers.
- Training program needed on Online Birthday tracking for marriage registers.
- Needed work with notary public and create mass awareness that court marriage is not acceptable by laws.
- Needed necessary action to prevent use of false birth certificate and marriage by notary public.