



MODULE ON
PREVENTION OF
CHILD MARRIAGE
FOR ADOLESCENTS

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Child Marriage for
Adolescents**

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Disclaimer

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Foreword

Child marriage is often talked about as a thing of the past, but it is evident that it is still prevalent in India. It results in disruption of a child's childhood in several ways, like segregation from family and friends, limiting the child's interactions with the community, peers, and lack of opportunities for education.

Girl children often face situations of bonded labor, enslavement, commercial sexual exploitation and violence as a result of child marriage. Child brides are often exposed to serious health risks, early pregnancy, and various STDs especially HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, boy children are burdened with family responsibilities and are forced to drop out of school. There are many reasons due to which parents consent to child marriages, such as economic necessity, need of male protection for their daughters, or oppressive traditional values and norms.

This module, designed by an expert group, aims to present a broader and thorough perspective on Child Marriage, its meaning, causes and consequences. The module focuses on giving an understanding of The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 to the adolescents. It also focuses on promoting skills of communication, decision making, and problem solving that are required in delaying the age of marriage in them.

Recently a Child Resource Centre (CRC) has been established as a joint initiative of the Department for Child Rights, Government of Rajasthan and Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration with initial support of UNICEF Rajasthan, to strengthen the existing child protection system in the state. Under CRC, capacity building, research, knowledge sharing, advocacy on child protection issues etc. are undertaken for the benefit of different stakeholders.

Best wishes,

Gurjot Kaur

Objectives

1. Understand the context and consequences of Child Marriages in Rajasthan.
2. Develop understanding on PCMA, 2006 and discuss the gaps and challenges in implementation of the Act.
3. Orientation on the role and responsibilities and develop action plan.

One Day Agenda

TIME	SESSION	FACILITATOR
10.00-10.30	Registration	Organizer
10.30-11.00	Inaugural session	Organizer
11.00-11.30	Ice breaking and Expectations from the training	Facilitator
11.30-11.45	Tea Break	
11.45-12.15	Causes of Child Marriage	Resource Person
12.15-01.00	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 – salient features	Resource Person
01.00-02.00	Lunch Break	Resource Person
02.00-03.00	Skills for delaying age of marriage – assertive communication skills	Facilitator
	Or	
	Skills for married adolescents – problem solving and decision making	
03.00- 03.15	Tea Break	Resource Person
03.15- 03.45	Open session	Facilitator
03.45- 04.45	Way forward and Valedictory session	Resource Person

One Day Orientation Session Plan

Objectives

- ❑ Explore the issue of child marriage – meaning, causes and consequences
- ❑ Understand the key provisions of PCMA act
- ❑ Know the skills required in delaying the age of marriage.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the session the adolescents will be able to

- ❑ Understand the consequences of early marriage or marriage before the legal age
- ❑ Know the key provisions of the PCMA act
- ❑ Exercise and practice problem solving, decision making and assertive communication skills required to delay the age at marriage
- ❑ Exercise and practice decision-making skills for girls who are married under the legal age of marriage.

Activity	Topic	Methodology	Time
1	Causes of Child Marriage	Group work, discussion and presentation	30 minutes
2	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006- Salient Features	Exhibition method, discussion and presentation	45 minutes
3	Skills for delaying age of marriage- assertive communication skills	Role play, group work, video clip, presentation	60 minutes
4	Skills for married adolescents- problem solving and decision making	Group discussion, video clip, presentation	60 minutes

Activity 1 - Causes of Child Marriage

Materials required – chart papers, markers

Time – 30 minutes

Methodology – group work, discussion and presentation

Step 1- The facilitator shares the story of Rumi

Rumi is a 15 years old girl who failed in her school exams. When she reached home and shared with her parents, they immediately asked her to stop going to school and be at home and do the household chores. In a matter of two months her parents were already speaking to several relatives for arranging for her marriage with a suitable boy. Rumi did not want to get married.

Step 2- Discuss the story of Rumi with adolescents and the various reasons why child marriage occurs.

Step 3 – Ask the adolescents what they understand by the term – “Child Marriage”. Write down the responses on the chart. Share with them the situation of child marriages in India and in Rajasthan

- ❑ Why does early marriage happen?
- ❑ What are the reasons given by the parents and society for marrying off their daughters /sons young?
- ❑ Who decides when marriage should take place?
- ❑ What are the criteria for marriage?

Step 4 – Divide the adolescents into 3 groups and ask the groups to discuss on –

- ❑ Group 1- Physical and psychological effects of child marriage on adolescents
- ❑ Group 2- Social and Health effects of child marriage on adolescents.
- ❑ Group 3- What are the aspirations and dreams of adolescents

Step 5- Ask the groups to share their discussion in the form of a presentation. The presentation can be of any kind as role-play, power-point presentation or chart presentation.

Step 6 – Discuss on each topic with the whole group, in case the groups have missed out on any issue or topic add on and conclude the activity.

Facilitators Guide

Impact of Early Marriage on Education

- Discontinued education
- Poor economic conditions
- Difficulties in taking care of children and family
- Malnutrition of both the girl and her children
- Increased helplessness

Impact of Early Marriage on Health

- Poor health condition
- No resource in the hands of the girl
- Loss of shelter on being thrown away from in-law's home and not getting shelter in parental home
- Impact of child marriage on violence
- Physical, spiritual and psychological Sexual exploitation/ harassment
- If there is coercion, force and no consent between married couples for a sexual relationship, it is called marital rape

Impact of Early Marriage on Right to choice

- Discontinued education
- No skill acquired
- No control over own body and reproductive health
- Trapped in gendered poverty cycle

Points to remember

The discussion may bring out various issues and debates. For example, we may hear stories on domestic violence, how parents do not act as support systems and would rather let their girls suffer as opposed to offering safety and support.

It is important to emphasize how we make young people informed and aware and help them in making healthy decisions. It is also important to change attitudes of families who see girls as a burden. If girls are empowered, educated and healthy, they will be able to support their parents as well as have healthy relationships which are equal and respectful. This will be possible also when we are able to bring justice in cases of violence and have zero tolerance for domestic violence.

Activity 2 – Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 -Salient features

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 was notified on 10th January 2007 to effectively deal with the issue of child marriage in the country. The law seeks to prevent child marriages by making certain actions punishable and by appointing certain authorities responsible for the prevention and prohibition of child marriages.

Materials required – Chart paper, marker

Time – 45 minutes

Methodology- Exhibition method, discussion and presentation

Step 1- Hang 4 charts in four different corners of the room and write one heading on each chart as follows-

Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4
How can we prevent child marriage	Punishments for person who forcefully get children married young	Provisions for children who are married and want to break the marriage	Provisions for rehabilitation for children who have broken their marriage

Step 2- Ask the adolescents to form a line and ask each one of them to write whatever they think is appropriate in the respective chart. Ensure that each and every person has written on the charts.

Step 3 – Discuss each aspect that the adolescents think that have to be included in a legal Act that will prevent or prohibit child marriages.

Step 4- Introduce the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and discuss the main provisions of the Act. Relate to the points as enumerated by the adolescents in the activity.

Step 5 – Ask the adolescents in case they want to discuss or ask anything and discuss the same.

Facilitators Guide

Child Marriage - An offence

- ❑ Child marriage is an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment, which may extend to 2 years, or with fine up to Rs.1 Lakh, or both.
- ❑ Courts can issue injunction order for prohibiting solemnization of child marriages (**Section 13, PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ Offences under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable (**Section 15, PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ Whoever performs conducts or directs or abets any child marriage shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment (**Section 10, PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ An Whoever, being a male adult above 18 years of age, contracts a child marriage punishment shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to 1 lakh rupees or with both (**Section 9, PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ Any person having charge of the child, including – parent or guardian any member of organization or association, promoting, permitting, participating in a child marriage or failing to prevent it (**Section 11 (1), PCMA, 2006**).
- ❑ Child Marriages are voidable and can be annulled (**Section 3 (1), PCMA, 2006**).
- ❑ The annulment of child marriage can be sought within a period of 2 years after the child who was a party to the marriage has attained majority (**Section 3 (3), PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ Only the children in the marriage themselves can lay petition for void and voidable marriage. And if the petitioner is a minor as per PCMA, the petition can be led through a guardian or the next best friend of the married child (who must be an adult of 18 years or more), along with the Child Marriage Prohibition Officer (CMPO) (**Section 3 (2), PCMA 2006**).

Under certain circumstances, child marriages can be declared null and void by the Family Courts.

- ❑ Any Child Marriage solemnized in contravention of an injunction order issued u/s 13, whether interim or final, shall be void ab initio;
- ❑ Any Child is taken or enticed out of the keeping of the lawful guardian;
- ❑ Any Child by forced compelled, or by any deceitful means induced to go from any place;
- ❑ Child is sold of the purpose of Marriage; and made to go through a form of marriage or if the minor is married after which the minor is sold of trafficked or used for immoral purpose, such as marriage shall be null and void.

Maintenance and Custody

- ❑ The CMPO is empowered to provide support and all possible aid including medical and legal aid to children affected by child marriages (**Section 16 (3), PCMA 2006**).

- ❑ The adult husband must pay maintenance to the minor girl until her re-marriage. In case the husband is a minor at the time of marriage, his guardian will pay maintenance (**Section 4 (1), PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ Children born from a child marriage are entitled to custody and maintenance because the law considers such children legitimate for all purposes even after the marriage has been annulled (**Sections 5 and 6, PCMA 2006**).
- ❑ A District Court is empowered to add to, modify or revoke any order relating to maintenance and custody of children born from a child marriage (**Section 7, PCMA 2006**).

Activity 3– Skills for delaying Age of marriage – Assertive Communication skills

Materials required – chart, markers, LCD/laptop

Time – 60 minutes

Methodology – role play, group work, presentation

Step 1- Tell the participants that in this session we will discuss about skills that will help us to speak and express ourselves. This will help us in our own lives or to help a friend.

Step 2- Ask participants to think of situations when they were not able to express what they felt. Ask them to recognize their thoughts and feelings at that time. Ask them to jot down the various obstacles that they experience while trying to explain what they want to express. Ask the participants to share their experiences and write down the barriers that they have faced in expressing what they have felt.

Step 3– Discuss with the participants on how better they could have dealt with the situation and share the important points to keep in mind while applying assertive communication skills. (Refer to facilitators Guide)

Step 4- Divide the participants into three groups and give them a situation. Ask the participants to discuss and come to a logical conclusion for the situation provided. The groups can present in any form as – role-play, presentation etc.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Communicating with parents and relatives on delaying age at marriage	Skills required to convince parents in context to study higher	Situations where one is not able to communicate with parents

Step 5 – Ask the participants to present their situation and initiate discussion on following points –

- ❑ Which characters could negotiate with their situation, what are the points that need to be kept in mind while we negotiate to delay age at marriage for ourselves or someone else
- ❑ What was the need of assertiveness while we are negotiating

Step 6 – Summarize the discussions.

Facilitators Guide

Some at-risk young people get into trouble because of their timidity and withdrawal responses to friends, family members and relatives. Others express themselves in hostile, angry, aggressive ways that cause problems for people and themselves.

Ability to speak and act with power while maintaining respect for others is important. This is a style in which individuals clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others.

While discussing on assertive communication ask the participants to identify their trouble spots by discussing the following:

- ❑ Do I struggle to ask for what I want?
- ❑ Is it hard to state my opinion?
- ❑ Do I have trouble saying no?

Share some Tips for Communicating Assertively:

- ❑ Many people find it hard to ask for what they want, feeling that they don't have the right to ask, or fearing the consequences of the request. For example, you may think, "What if he says no?" or "She would think I am rude for asking".
- ❑ Next, describe the situation and how you feel about it. For example, "This is not the right time, I feel I can study for a few more years and then get married." It is important to talk about your feelings, not to make accusations to others. For example, it is better to say, "I know I did not succeed in my exams this time, but I want to give myself a chance
- ❑ Then, describe what you would like to see happen. Be as brief and positive as possible. For example, "I really want to become someone important and earn money and I want you to be proud of me."
- ❑ Last, tell the person what would happen if your request was honored. How would you feel? Sometimes, you may want to add what you will do in return. For example, "I would make sure to be responsible and prove myself."
- ❑ Being assertive means that you "own" your opinion; that is, you take responsibility for your view; for example, "I feel I can study higher and not be just at home and raise children."
- ❑ Being assertive also means being willing to consider new information, and even changing your mind. However, it does not mean changing your mind just because others think differently.

Tips for Saying "No"

- ❑ Saying "No" can be difficult if you are usually more passive. However, if you are not able to say no to others, you are not in charge of your own life.
- ❑ When saying "No", remember to use assertive body language (e.g. standing straight, eye contact, speaking loudly enough that the other person can hear).

- ❑ Before you speak, decide what your position is. For example, think about how you will say "No" to a request, such as, "I would like to help you out but I already have quite a bit of work to get done this week."
- ❑ Make sure to actually wait for the question, and don't say "Yes" before the other person even makes the request.
- ❑ Take care not to apologize, defend yourself or make excuses for saying "No" when it is not necessary.
- ❑ If saying "No" right away is too difficult, practice telling someone, "I need to think about it" as a first step. This will help break the cycle of always saying yes, and will give you a chance to think about what you really want to do.

Remember: Everyone has the right to say "No!"

Practice your new assertiveness skill

- ❑ First, think of a couple of past scenarios when you avoided giving your opinion or preference, saying "No", or asking for what you wanted. How could you have handled the situation differently? What would be an assertive way to communicate in those situations?
- ❑ Practice saying your assertive statement out loud to yourself, to get used to it.
- ❑ Next, think of a situation that is coming up in the next week in which you could use your assertiveness skills. Begin with a scenario that is easier, for example, giving your opinion or saying "No" to more familiar people, and then try it in more difficult situations.
- ❑ Try it out – how did it go? Notice how the other person reacted. Would you do something differently next time? **Remember: assertiveness is like any new skill, and requires time and practice.** Don't be too hard on yourself if you are feeling nervous, or not getting it quite right. Reward yourself when you do speak up

Note: Sometimes people who are not used to us being assertive may need some time to adjust. Just because people may not initially respond in a positive way, doesn't mean that being assertive is wrong – they just need to adjust to the change!

Barriers to Behaving Assertively - Myths about Assertiveness

- ❑ **Myth #1: Assertiveness means getting your own way all the time:** This is not true. Being assertive means expressing your point of view and communicating honestly with others. Often, you may not get "your own way" when you are assertively giving your opinion. But telling others how you feel and trying to work out a compromise shows respect for both yourself and others.
- ❑ **Myth #2: Being assertive means being selfish:** This is false. Just because you express your opinions and your preferences does not mean that other people are forced to go along with you.
- ❑ **Myth #3: Passivity is the way to be loved:** This is false. Being passive means always agreeing with others, always allowing them to get their own way, giving into their wishes, and making no demands or requests of your own. Behaving this way is no guarantee that others will like or admire you. In fact, they may perceive you as dull and feel frustrated that they can't really get to know you.

Activity 4– Skills for married adolescents – Decision making skills

Materials required – chart paper, marker

Time – 60 minutes

Methodology- brainstorming, discussion and presentation

Step 1- The discussion with the adolescents who are married need to focus on their future aspects and how they might shape the coming years of their lives.

Step 2- Ask the participants to think about what would they be doing if they were unmarried. Ask them to share their responses and write the responses on the white board. Open a discussion on decision-making strategies. Have you ever made a choice that resulted in a consequence that you did not want? Invite the students to share. How do we decide whether we should do something or not? How do you make a choice or a decision? If we want to improve our consequences, we have to improve our decision-making strategies.

Step 3 – Share with the participants the various steps of decision making as in facilitators guide. Further, share with them today we are going to learn how to improve consequences by improving how we go about choosing what to do. Ask the participants for problem and explore on the following questions -

1. What is the problem?
2. What are the choices you have?
3. What do you think the consequences of these choices will be for yourself and others who are involved?
4. What values do you need to consider?
5. How do you feel about the situation?
6. Is there anything else you need to learn about it?
7. Do you need to ask for help? Who will you ask?
8. What is your decision?
9. Do you think you made the right decision? Why?

Facilitators Guide

THE FOUR STEPS IN DECISION-MAKING

Step 1 THE SITUATION: A situation has an invisible “stop sign.” Stop, think, and then act. We have to recognize the situation that requires our attention. We need to identify those kinds of situations that require “putting on the brakes.” It can be very helpful to discuss some recent situations where we have experienced that requires “putting on the brakes,” but that choice wasn’t recognized until it was too late.

Step 2 THINK: we need to think about all the possible choices that can be in a specific situation. Then consider the possible consequences of each choice.

Step 3 THEIR DECISION: After thinking about all your choices and the possible consequences of each choice, need to decide on what to do.

Step 4 EVALUATE DECISION: This step is designed to help us to learn from our mistakes. Some decisions are just fine. Others will be “okay,” but not great. In such decisions where we thought a mistake has been made we need to think more on the situation, what were the choices, what was the thinking, and what was the decision.

Here are some questions that keep the discussion going, without judgment or criticism, and help participants evaluate a decision they’ve made:

1. What do you think you could have done differently?
2. What do you wish you had done differently?
3. What did you need to consider that you didn't think about?
4. How do you think your decision turned out? Or
5. If the participant isn't pleased with the outcome, ask questions 1, 2, or 3 to help the adolescent learn how to evaluate the decision that was made.

Step 4 – Ask the participants to think of one decision they want to consider and ask them to use the discussed steps. Sum up the session by revisiting the 4 steps of decision making and 9 questions that we need to keep in mind while we decide on something.

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